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ZELDEE,

THE

DEVIL'S DAUGHTER,

BY

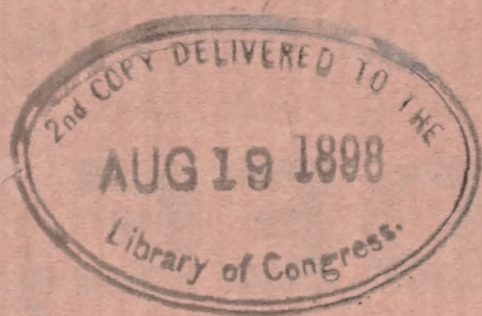
Robt. Edgar Lufsey.

“And so it came about, that the Devil became the father of a daughter; though the king had her killed immediately after birth; but her soul still lives, and the devil calls her Zeldee.”

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Salisbury, N. C.

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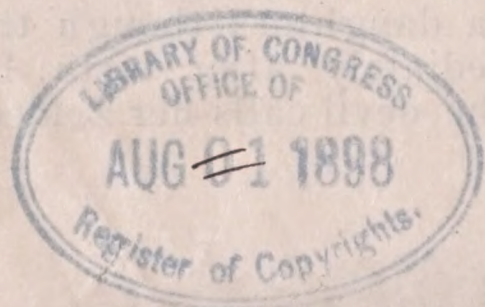
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PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

Being aware of several errors in this, the first edition of Zeldee, and not wishing to enumerate them, as some of our readers may overlook them, if we do not, we respectfully ask those, who are capable of finding the errors, to correct them for themselves; and to those, who do not find them, there is no harm done.

THE PUBLISHERS.

PREFACE.

There is a class of people, supposed to be religious, who hold the name of "Devil" in reverence and awe; but, who would not hesitate to tell a joke in which the name of God was lightly used. These people will place their hands before their faces and cry, "For shame," if they should chance to read "Zeldee."

This same class of people, and most of them are women, old fogies who delight in getting together and defaming their lady friends, and who usually tell some very questionable jokes before separating at which all laugh heartily, will be shocked at what they will term, "The Indecencies of the Story." To these people I wish to say a few words: "Evil is evil to him that evil thinketh." If you can not read of Zeldee, and the other characters of my story without having unclean thoughts take the advice of the author and never read your Bible, only, when some friend, who is more pure in mind than you, has obliterated several passages, chapters and even books, that to read them would make you sin."

And now a few words to my intelligent readers. I have changed the alleged power of the mythical Philosopher's Stone to suit my story. I have made

two of my characters remarkable hypnotists; I have displayed United States senators as sharpers; and I have, perhaps, over-drawn the picture of the American, who preferred France to his own country; but it has all been done to add interest. I have introduced sophistical reasoning for effect, only; but as to the repeated use or transmigration of souls, the belief in this is being adopted by some of the brainiest men of to-day. So would pigmies, like you and I, dare to say it is not true?

ROBT. EDGAR LUFSEY.

Salisbury, N. C., June, 1898.

ZELDEE, THE DEVIL'S DAUGHTER.

PART ONE.

THE LIVING DEAD.

CHAPTER I.

A STORMY NIGHT.

"My stars! what a night," said the doctor, shivering and turning up his coat collar so as to protect his ears from the cutting wind. "It is a fit one for the devil to come forth to cool his parched bones and lure unfortunate beings into the warmth of his infernal region."

"Yes," replied the preacher, stamping his feet, and looking wonderingly at the doctor, as the latter was known to be an unbeliever. "It is a rough night; but I do not think I'd like to accompany Old Nick to his kingdom for all of its warmth."

"It couldn't be much more disagreeable than this," growled the doctor, shoving his hands further into his over coat pockets. "Bah! I'm frozen through and through."

The "Sunny South" had belied its name and the snow had fallen all day and was still falling. Not in the heavy, large flakes of the morning but

in blinding sheets of fine mist, driven along by the fierce wind that had now shifted to the North, and seemed to come direct from the "North Pole." There were few living beings on the Birmingham streets; the hackmen had disappeared and their hacks and horses with them; the boot-blacks and news-boys were gone with their cries of "Shine," and "Evening News," and even the policeman had sought the shelter of neighboring saloons. The doctor and preacher alone kept the streets from being entirely deserted, that is as far as they could see.

Dr. William Anderson had just arrived on a belated train, and he and his friend the Rev. George Holland were standing at the corner of Morris Avenue and Twentieth street waiting for an electric car that would take them within a block of the latter's home. But no car came, for the simple reason, they had been snow-bound two hours before.

"Well Doc," finally said the preacher, no car will come, I reckon, so I suppose we will have to put up at a hotel or get a hack to take us home."

"The hack will be best," replied the doctor, "as your wife will be uneasy if you don't get home to-night."

"Yes I expect she will, so come along, there are no hacks upon the street, we will have to go to a stable." The preacher led the way, trudging through the snow, to the nearest livery stable. But alas! no horse would be let to go out on such a night.

"Let us walk," said the doctor.

"What, walk two miles in a blizzard like this?" asked Holland, while a shiver ran through his frame

at the thought of it.

The doctor replied, with a laugh, "Why not? it's rough I admit; but, walking will warm us, and besides we can't spend the night in the street. It won't do to go to a hotel either, as your wife will be waiting for you; and two stout fellows like you and I ought to be able to walk two miles."

The preacher yielded reluctantly and the two began the disagreeable tramp. Any one, who has walked far in a deep snow, knows what they had to endure. The distance was only two miles; but it seemed ten ere they had gone half the way. Try as they would to go fast, they made but slow progress. The fierce wind was biting cold and the fine snow blinded them so they could scarcely see the way. Finally the preacher stopped.

"I can go no further," he said, "I am tired out, and we have only come half way." And he puffed and blowed; while perspiration dropped from his brow, which froze as it fell.

They were in a solitary part of the town where but few houses had been erected, and the one nearest them was at least a hundred yards away. The doctor had stopped a few paces from his friend, and like him, was puffing and blowing like a steam engine.

"That's the longest mile I ever walked in my life. By George, if I believe I can go any further either! Suppose we test the hospitality of the people at this house. They can't well take us for tramps and if they do, I don't think they would turn us out in a night like this—and besides, you may know them."

"I hardly think I know them," responded his

companion, "but like you I think it best to ask them to take us in for the night. My wife will be very anxious I know; but it can't be helped."

Anderson had already started toward the house and Holland followed. Trying the front gate they found it would not open, owing to the snow being banked around it; but, nothing daunted, the two men got over the fence, went up the slippery steps with care and were about to ring the bell when the door was suddenly opened by a woman, apparently seventy years of age. She stood there shading with one hand a lamp, which she held in the other to keep the wind from extinguishing the feeble flame.

"Come in gentlemen," she said, without waiting for them to speak. "We've been looking for you for an hour or more."

"Impossible," said the doctor, who took upon himself the part of spokesman, "you make a mistake. We, ourselves, did not know we were coming here until a few moments ago, when we could proceed no further in the wind and snow."

"I know you did not know it," rejoined the woman with a slight smile, but I knew it Dr. Anderson, and you Mr. Holland, don't worry about your wife she has ceased to worry about you, thinking you must have gone to a hotel. She and your little boy, Willie, have retired long before this. So come right in my husband is waiting impatiently to see you.'

The men were startled when their names were called. How did this woman, whom they had never seen before, know their names? How could she speak so positively of Holland's wife and child?

Surely she could not have been to his home that night. These were their thoughts and they were about to question her when she repeated, "Come right in my husband is waiting."

Exchanging a look the men entered; they could not remain on the outside in the storm, and the woman closed and locked the door. Then holding her dress with one hand and the lamp with the other she mounted the stair followed by the bewildered doctor and preacher.

CHAPTER II.

MARCUS ANTHOIN.

Shakespeare, perhaps, had fore-seen this time when he put the words in the mouth of Hamlet, "There are more things in Heaven and Earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy." Here was a woman with nothing to distinguish her, in looks, from other withered crones of her age, except, a pair of extremely bright eyes, (but such eyes, black and piercing; eyes that seemed to go through one and read his innermost thoughts) who could call men, she had never seen before, by their names and tell them of their families.

Anderson, who was something of a hypnotist, experienced a strange sensation when he looked into the woman's eyes, like he supposed his subjects felt when being hypnotized, and Holland too felt a chill pass over him, a chill different from that caused by

the wintery air, when he saw those piercing black orbs turned toward his face.

But these unusual feelings did not deter them from following her, though they instinctively drew closer to each other. At the head of the stairs the woman turned to the right and walked along the passage a short distance until she came to a door; opening this, she said, "Walk in gentleman."

At the same time, a thin, squeaking voice called from the room, "Come in, come in, don't stop, the hour I have waited seems like an age, and still you creep." The doctor's face turned pale and the preacher's hair seemed to stand on end; and each man took a step backward as though he would run. If the woman had witch's eyes the man had a demon's voice. Noticing their alarm the woman laughed—a strange wierd laugh—and said, "Come sirs, there is nothing to fear, we may be queer souls, but we will not hurt you, Come." Not daring to raise their eyes to hers, the men now followed. In the room they found a little, old, weazen-faced man lying on a bed in a corner. He was glaring at them by the feeble light furnished by the lamp the woman had placed on a table in the center of room. Glaring at them, we repeat, with a look of exultant joy.

"Oh! you're here at last," he began again in that same demonish voice, "It seemed you'd never come. You see gentlemen I wish to tell you of my past life, or, as you may think afterward, of my death."

The preacher looked more frightened than ever, but the doctor had regained his composure; for, he thought he saw before him a delirious victim of

fever.

"I see! I see!" he said turning to the woman, "How long has he been like this?" He was startled again and the preacher's face was livid, for peal after peal of laughter from both the man and woman followed the query. Hellish laughter, laughter such as fiends are supposed to laugh over their victims; but it ceased as suddenly as it had begun.

"Excuse us," said the old man to Anderson, "But, just before you came I said to my wife, that, you would think I was a deliriously sick man, and want to doctor me. I may be sick, but all your medicine doctor, would not cure me." Then noticing their alarm he continued, "Don't be frightened gentlemen, several things may seem strange and unnatural, but after a while you'll understand why. My name is Marcus Anthoin and that is my wife," pointing to the woman. "You are known to us Dr. Anderson; Baltimore is not so far away from Birmingham but that we have heard of you and your wonderful cures combined with your powers as a hypnotist."

"Really sir," began Anderson, who was feeling more at ease as he became accustomed to the man's voice. "You do me —"

"Tut! tut!" broke in the old man, "I know what you would say, 'too much honor,' and all that; but its just as I say, we have heard of you, honor or no honor. And of you too sir," turning to Holland, "You are a servant of the Lord, may you prosper in your work." As he said this, his voice lost its demon's accent, and dropped into a full, mellow tone; only to go back to its high, shrill pitch when he spoke again. "You are one of the few he has

left. There are many called such, but most of them serve mammon instead."

A grunt from the woman followed this speech. "You are a fine one to talk on such matters," she said in a sarcastic manner. "Please do not do so again, my ears are paining me now."

"Then Antonette, you had better go into the adjoining room and retire," said the man Anthoin. "If you remain here I am afraid your ears will be pained several times. If we need you we will call you."

There was a command in his voice that was not implied by his words. The woman colored deeply, and seemed to regret the hastily spoken, satirical words, but, yet she answered in a quiet voice, "Very well Marcus." And then to the others, "If you gentlemen will excuse me I will retire."

The doctor and preacher were only too glad to have her out of the room and hastened to say so, only in a polite way.

"Gentleman," said Marcus Anthoin, when his wife had left the room, "You must excuse me for two things; first, my sending my wife out of the room; and second, my troubling you to listen to a narrative that does not concern you. My excuse for the first is, she was the cause of my debasement, and I have been debased gentlemen, oh! more than you can imagine, but I did not wish to pain her as a true recital of my story might do. Yes doctor," he continued as he noticed Anderson's eyes turned toward the door by which the woman had left. "She may listen there and hear what I say, but if she does, it is her fault, not mine; and besides she may not be as susceptible to pain as I suppose. My ex-

cuse or plea for the second is, the overwhelming burden of a secret."

As he talked his voice softened until it sank to the full, mellow tones we have before mentioned. "If either of you have ever had a great secret, you know what a burden it is to the soul. Although my story does not concern you, it will prove interesting, and will afford you food for new thought. Still, if you would rather not listen to it, I will recall my wife, and have you shown to a room, where you can pass the night and go your way in the morning." He paused and gazed wistfully at the two men; then as they hesitated he added, "To relieve my soul of its weight would be raising it from its thrall of degradation. With this secret burdening my heart, I cannot live a month longer; but with the secret removed I might have a few years more on earth."

Hesitating no more, the preacher at once announced his willingness to listen to the tale; while Anderson, who was ever willing to hear anything wierd and strange, as he supposed the story would be, and who had hesitated only out of deference to his friend's feelings, assured the queer old man that nothing would please him more.

But little did he think what effect that recital would have upon his life; and in what way or where he would meet the reciter again.

CHAPTER III.

THE STORY BEGINS.

The wind blew more fiercely than ever; it rattled the windows, and howled about the house like demons trying to force an entrance to prevent the old man from divulging his secret.

The snow beat against the window pains, making a dismal sound; the fire in the grate had burned low; and a clock, in another part of the house, had just struck the hour of twelve; when Marcus Anthoin opened his eyes. He had been lying with them closed for five or ten minutes, as though trying to recall all of the important events of that past life, which he was now about to trust to mortal ears, for the first time. The two friends had refrained from disturbing his reverie, but sat there, looking silently at him with something like a pitying expression upon each face.

Anthoin raised himself in bed as he opened his eyes, and propping himself with a pillow, said, "If one of you will be so kind as to replenish the fire, I will begin."

Holland arose immediately and filled the grate with coal, and, then returned to his seat, saying as he did so, "Very well Mr. Anthoin we are ready to listen."

"Yes proceed," said Anderson, without taking his eyes from the old man's face.

Settling himself more comfortably against his pillow; and turning his small gray eyes toward his

audience of two, Anthoin began: "Thirty years or so ago, a man was seated by the fire in his room, listening to the wind howling about the house. 'Twas just such a night as this, the snow was falling, and to add to the dismalness of the night a bow of a tree out-side his window kept tapping upon the window pane. That man was myself—Merideth Kline. I had just passed my twenty-fifth birthday; and having enough of this world's goods to live a life of idleness, I proceeded forth-with to do so. Like other young men of that age, I don't mean all young men, I was a skeptic. Hell to me was a myth; the miracles of Christ were illusions; the lives of the prophets were traditions, nothing more; preachers were hypocrites; and those who went to hear them preach were fools. I would have liked to have added in my agnosticism, "There is no God," but I could not bring myself to believe that. Everything pointed to a Being of Supremacy. There must have been something to fashion this world, and the others we see at night.

The philosopher might write of evolution; and the materialist might talk of the world having existed forever, and this earth, a small portion of it, being formed by heat; but, call it heat or call it God, there was Supremacy somewhere, and because my mother had called it so, I chose to call that Supremacy, "God."

"My father was a Lutheran minister and had a large charge. My mother was a Metheodist before her marriage, but united with the Lutheran church afterward. She was a good woman, and used all the means in her power to bring me up in the fear of the Lord and make me a believer in

Christianity; but like many other good people, then and now, she made the mistake of confounding fear and love. If God was the kind, loving Father she said he was, why should we fear Him? Thus I reasoned, even when a very small child. As to Christianity, Wasn't my father a Christian? And yet I couldn't believe in his piety. He talked very nice in the pulpit, but he talked quite differently at home. Several times I'd seen him very much under the influence of alcoholic drinks; though, at these times he kept himself close in his study. Many a time when a youngster, I have hidden behind his book-case to listen to his musings, for he had a habit of talking aloud to himself, there I would hear things which, though I would not repeat, I would store away in my mind and ponder over.

"I learned in this way that he was not consistent in anything. He believed in a God in a vague way; but a life after death, and especially a life in a fiery hell, to him was bosh, although his best sermons were preached upon this theme.

"Is it any wonder, then; that as I grew into young manhood, I should be a doubter?

"I studied law, and succeeded fairly well in my profession. Besides being an agnostic and a lawyer, I was nearly a woman hater. I see you smile. It was the same old story of 'blue eyes and sunny curls;' a few short hours of happy love and then she loved another. I never cared for woman's society after that—except my mother's; but she died soon after. My father had died two years before.

"After her death I occupied the old house that had come to me by inheritance. And this brings me back to the point where I started, when I sat in

my room on such a night as this, and listened to the wind, the snow and the old dead branch tapping upon the window. Doctor will you please hand me that cough medicine that is on the mantle? I am getting hoarse."

Anderson got the medicine for Anthoin, who thanked him and continued with his story.

"Tap, tap. I can almost hear that old branch tapping at the window now. Tap, tap. I was reading Edgar Allen Poe's poem, 'The Raven.' I could almost recite it from memory, but still I was reading it, as I often did. It seemed to appeal more to my feelings when reading it, than when reciting it. When I came to the lines,

'Surely,' said I. 'Surely that is

Something at my window lattice.'

"I half arose from my chair to go to my window, to see if a raven was tapping there or not; but, 'No,' said I, 'It is that old, dead branch.' And so I went on with the poem, and dwelt musingly on the lines,

'On the morrow he will leave me

As my friends have done before.'

You see I had a melancholy disposition, and liked anything with a sad thought expressed. I read the poem to the end; and then leaned back in my chair to think of what is contained in the word 'Nevermore.' Ah! what a word, even to me, now that I know it is almost meaningless, it seems full of pain.

"How long I sat there I do not know. It seemed as though I slept; yet, all the time I heard that old branch, beating a sad refrain upon the window; and the wind howling mournfully about the

house. I had a dream and in that dream I saw a woman. She came and stood before me, in the room where I was sitting; for I was still conscious of where I was. She had a small jeweled spear in her hand which she shook playfully at me, saying as she did so, 'You are mine, do you know that? Merideth I say you are mine.' And then she laughed a peculiar laugh. 'Do you know what love is?' she continued. 'Yes, I know you do; but you will soon forget, that is, that other love. You will learn to love me as I love you. Did you know I loved you? I am as pretty as that other, am I not? Her weak, blue eyes and light colorless hair can't compare with my eyes and hair.' And indeed they could not. Such hair as hers I had never seen before, as I could remember: black and full a yard long, falling over her shoulders—bare shoulders, gleaming white in the fire-light. Her only dress was a bit of white material, almost transparent, fastened around the waist and hanging only half way to her knees. Her hands and feet were small, 'Dainty hands and feet,' a poet would have called them. Her perfectly formed limbs were smooth and white as alabaster. Her face was perfect in every feature, from her intellectual forehead to her beautifully molded chin. Such a face a man is not likely to forget, but I forgot it as soon as I awoke, only her eyes remained clear of all her beauty—her lovely hair, her marble like brow, her ruby lips and pearly teeth, her swan like breast, her tiny hands, with the jewel spear, her graceful limbs and sculptured feet, all, were forgotten. Her eyes alone remained. You've seen those eyes to-night gentlemen; but not as I saw them then; eyes as black as

the blackest night; eyes that pierced into my brain; eyes that seemed to laugh and talk and dance; eyes that held me spell-bound. I could still hear her voice, though, with its musical cadence, not that it was always musical; she was saying, 'You are mine I say; if not you shall be;' and other things similar to that. When I awoke the fire had burned out and the light was getting low. I retired and tried to sleep; but for a long time I could not. Those black eyes haunted me; finally I dropped into uneasy slumber, and then again I saw that woman, and trembled in my sleep. As before her eyes outweighed the other charms; and she seemed to know it, and made them sink deeper and deeper into my brain. I never have been the same since that night. Through all these years those eyes have been before me. Go where I would I seemed to be following those eyes. They were not always the same; some times, instead of being black, they were blue, or gray, or brown; sometimes they were soft, laughing eyes; then again they were cold, stern ones; but they have always had the power, until tonight, to make me come or go as their owner wished. How I have escaped from their influence you shall hear after awhile. Thus you see my whole life has been wrecked by a dream.

"Dreams are what wise-acres call, 'passing thoughts.' Dreams are what you and others laugh at, as fancies of the brain. Dreams are what philosophers say, 'Is the mind unburdening itself.' Wrong, all of you are wrong. A dream is the soul being awake, while the body sleeps. You may as well tell me, that, 'The bee is not working because the hive does not move,' as to tell me, 'Dreams are

not realities because the body sleeps.' Have you ever in your dreams, seen places that seem perfectly familiar? You remember the dream when you awake, but cannot remember when or where you ever saw that place, and yet, you have seen it, at least, your soul has, and in your dream it goes back to it again. The soul can see the past, the present and the future. It is what the soul sees and does that we call dreams."

Anderson and Holland were interested, and asked many questions concerning dreams, to which the old man replied, proving by his answers that dreams belong to the soul. It was an old subject with him, and although the two friends tried to trap him on some of his answers; they failed to do so.

If the man was a lunatic as they thought at times; he was one that was more than a match for them in an argument—on dreams any-way.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DEVIL'S PIT.

"Continue with your story" said Anderson. "I am anxious to hear more of it." Holland drew his chair nearer the fire, nodding to Anthoin as he did so, "Yes, go on with your tale. Tell us more about those wonderful eyes."

"There is so much I could tell," responded he, "That I hardly know what to tell. But I'll pass over two years—years of torture; for those eyes

were ever before me, nearly making me crazy. I could scarcely sleep; and when I did, there was that beautiful creature with her maddening eyes; and she was always telling me how she loved me; until, instead of loving her as she said I would, I abhorred her. "I lost my appetite, barely eating enough to keep alive. I began to decrease in weight until I was but a shadow of my former self. Of course I consulted a doctor; but I was ashamed to tell him of my vision, as I chose to call the woman of my dreams, so he was left in ignorance of the root of my disease. He no doubt attributed it to dissipation; and advised me to leave home and travel abroad for awhile. Sending me from wild associates I suppose he thought. I took his advice however, and left home. I never returned.

One night I was sitting in the common room of a hotel in a small village in Austria, I had been there a week for I liked the place, there being several English speaking people there, when I heard some one mention a pit known as the 'Devil's Pit,' into which no one could look without having a desire--an almost uncontrollable desire--to throw himself into it. It was not far from there, they said. Other travelers besides myself, were stopping at the hotel; and a party was quickly formed to visit the pit on the following day. Two guides were secured, one of whom could speak English and the other French, as there was to be both French and English in the party.

"On the following morning we started early, for our rough tramp in the mountains. But little did I think, that, after I saw the 'Devil's Pit,' Merideth Kline would be known on earth no more.

"I felt remarkably well that day; the night before being the only night, for over two years, that I had passed without a dream. Those eyes had ceased to haunt me as soon as I retired the evening before, and I slept a sound peaceful sleep all through the night. My companions that morning were in high spirits, laughing and joking as we marched along; and I joined with them, which surprised them somewhat I suppose; for during the short stay I had made in the town I had been very morose. But now it was different. Those lovely, though distracting eyes, had not returned with the morning; and I felt like a man escaped from prison: I felt free; but, oh! so afraid of being fettered again. Determining to make the best of any liberty, however, I chatted merrily with the rest.

" 'Well Balto,' said one of my companions to our guide who spoke English, 'We want to know if this Devil's Pit is very deep and if it has a lake at the bottom, burning with fire and brimstone?'

" 'Mon Dieu!' exclaimed a Frenchman. 'If his Satanic majesty is at the bottom of the pit, I don't want to go too near it.'

" 'Oh! Frenchy, Frenchy,' cried a gay, rollicking Englishman, giving him the appellation applied to so many Frenchmen. 'I should have thought you was an infidel. Most of your countrymen are.'

" 'That is a great mistake,' replied the other. 'The most of us may be skeptics, but not infidels, as you mean, atheist. Some Frenchmen are, I am sorry to say; but I am not. I am confident there is a God. Have I not seen His works here and elsewhere?' And he looked about over the surround-

ing country.

"I took it upon myself to answer. 'Undoubtedly it is God's work; but, do you also believe in a devil?'

" 'Certainly,' and he looked surprised. 'To believe in one is to believe in the other.'

" 'Negatoire,' I said. 'Now I believe in a supreme being, God; but in the other I do not. The devil's a myth and hell's a fraud. But Balto hasn't answered our friends' questions. Is the pit deep; is there fire at the bottom; and, can you hear the clank of the devil's chains? Eh, Balto?'

"I heard him reply, that, the pit was very deep; that he'd never heard of any fire in it; and that, if the devil was there, the rattle of his chains could not be heard; but it sounded to me, as though he was a long way off; for those tormenting eyes had returned with ten-fold power exactly at the moment I had said, 'The devil's a myth and hell's a fraud.'

"I needed no guide now; those eyes were guides enough. They served to lead me irresistibly forward; as I advanced they retreated, I soon took the lead of the party. My actions appeared strange to my companions I know, I heard them commenting upon them; but I had lost my power of speech soon after those eyes returned. But would I have explained if I could have spoken? I doubt it. For who likes to display their infirmities to mortal eyes? I looked then upon those vision eyes as an infirmity.

"The day had lost all charm for me. The bright, blue sky, the distant mountain peaks so dazzling white as the sun shone upon their snowy

crest; the huge boulders that here and there overhung the mountain road on which we traveled; the hardy, little mountain songsters warbling their lays as they flew past or calling to their mates in the shrubbery; the vultures and the noble eagle soaring far above us; were unnoticed by me then, although I had admired them so much before. Nothing but those eyes were visible. I walked as one who slept. On and on, following those eyes; on and on, over the rough mountain road; and leaving that behind, on and on, up a steep mountain path—climbing and scrambling; onward and upward. Finally immersing on a small plateau I turned to my left, because the eyes did so. I had been getting farther ahead of my companions all the time. I realized it; but what mattered that, if I kept up with the eyes that led me?

“I was half way across the plateau when my friends arrived upon it. In a vague way I knew they were calling me, and running after me at full speed; but at the same time I was seized with an uncontrollable desire to catch those eyes or the owner of them and began to run also, increasing my speed to my uttermost. Once I tripped and fell and when I regained my feet my pursuers were nearly up with me, and those eyes were farther away; then I ran faster than ever. I heard my friend call, ‘Stop! stop!’ and the guide cry, ‘The Devil’s Pit sir! the Devil’s Pit!’ but faster I ran. Then the eyes vanished. I was in space, falling, falling. The eyes were gone and I was lost. I realized it, and grasped wildly at the rocks as I flew by. ’Twas the Devil’s Pit I knew. The devil had claimed his victim at last; and I was the victim.

CHAPTER V.

THE RUSH OF SOULS.

“Did you ever dream of falling, and, then, when you struck the earth, which you thought would be the end of you, be surprised that you still lived and then continue to dream? If you have, you no doubt have an idea of how I felt while falling into the Devil’s Pit.

“Down, down, down, gaining velocity at every moment. I could see the hard, smooth bottom; I closed my eyes; and then I struck; but I felt no pain. I began to rise out of the pit. I was not flying for I had no wings; and yet I was rising, I was resting on nothing, I seemed as light as air. Upon reaching the surface of the earth I saw my friends gazing into the depths below, and heard one of them say, ‘Poor fellow, he must have gone crazy,’ and another added, ‘I never have thought he was exactly right.’ I knew they thought my actions were strange so did not take offence at what they said. I spoke kindly to them, and told them that I was not dead, but they appeared not to see or hear me. I was a little piqued at this. Then it slowly dawned upon me that I was dead, at least my body was, and this was my soul; that I could see and hear them, but they could not see or hear me. I looked back into the pit, and there was the form of a man lying at the bottom. I had no doubt that it was my body. Another thing that surprised me was, that before my fall I could not

understand the Frenchmen or Austrians when speaking in their native tongues; but now I could, not only understand, but could speak in either of them. Just then I heard a sound, like one often hears before a mighty wind reaches us. Before this it seemed as though I was waiting for something, I did not know what; now I seemed to know, that what caused this noise, was what I was waiting for. Suddenly I began to move, from no exertion or will of mine, gradually at first and then faster and faster. The last I saw of my late companions was, when they were slowly turning away from the Devil's Pit. I watched them as I swept along until they appeared to be mere specks in the distance; and then faded from view.

"I was not touching the earth; but like a feather, was carried through the air a few yards above; sometimes rising to pass a mountain, then dipping down into a valley; always speeding onward. I did not feel frightened; I remembered having gone through it all several times before. I was no agnostic then, I surmised nothing, I knew it all. I remembered the first time I had made that journey, when Cain had killed my body, and my soul had rushed on not knowing whither it went. Abel had been the name of my mortal frame; but what would be the name of my soul? And oh! how frightened I had been. I laughed then as I thought of it. I remembered all of the bodies I had inhabited; and knew I had power to resemble any of them or be a composite of several. I also knew I had power to speak and understand any language, as I had done several times. I knew again that, when the soul dies as it sometimes does; for God has said, 'The

soul that sinneth, it shall die,' it would have no power whatever, but would go to hell, and have to remain there ever-more; but as long as the soul lived it would be given a new body, and have another season on earth, and that it would have to remain in the body except when the body slept, and then it was permitted to roam about, and leave it until the body awoke.

"You gentlemen do not understand these things, but I will answer any questions concerning them that you may ask, after I am through with my narrative.

"Well, to proceed. My soul continued to increase in speed until it reached the main channel of souls, this is the channel that leads to the other world as you call it. There I went bowling along at I dare say several hundred miles an hour. There were many other souls in the channel besides myself—weak, puny souls, that I knew were dead and making the journey for the last time; there were good souls and bad souls, what I mean by bad souls, are those who were cut off by accident, before their allotted time on earth, cut off in their sinfulness. I was of these. The farther I traveled the more souls there were, jostling and crowding each other; pushing and shoving; rolling and tossing; each one drawn along by that irresistible power.

"Over the mountains, we went and through the valleys; sweeping through village or town or city; on through Vienna's streets, catching but a glimpse of its bustle as we passed; on and on without a stop, without a stay, on! on! on! Leaving Austria behind we rushed through Bavaria, Wurttemberg, Baden and Alsace; through city and vale.

Thence over France; through the proud city Paris; on to the coast; and then out over the wide expanse of water. Rushing, whirring and whizzing; cleaving the salt sea air. Suddenly there was a pause and then I began to rise or fall, I could scarcely tell which, with a rapid movement. Then another pause and forward I moved again."

"Did the other souls move forward with you?" asked Anderson, who was very much interested in the tale.

"I know not," replied Anthoin. "For it had suddenly become dark as night, and I felt alone. The power, that had drawn me on, influenced me no more. I knew where I was, but it was awful to be there alone. It was the 'Valley and the Shadow of Death.'

"Souls have passed and repassed, but never a path has been found there. A trackless waste; a desert bare; a soundless space: no song of gladness; no word of cheer; no hope; no joy; faith nearly gone; fear, nothing but fear; lost, lost, lost; that is the way the soul feels until it sees the beacon light, away, in the distance. First a tiny spark appears which becomes brighter and larger, broader and grander, until the great search ray reaches the soul. Then hope returns.

"I went toward the light as I had done so many times before; for I knew it was a safe guide, that would not err. But if I, who was still alive and vigorous, felt the desolation of the place so keenly, what must have been the feelings of those dead souls, passing through the darkness for the last time; passing never to return, knowing as they most surely did, that when they passed the gates

of hell, those gates would never open to set them free again. I—”

“One moment,” interrupted Holland. “What do you mean by ‘Those gates would never open to set them free again’? Are not those gates, once closed upon a soul, closed forever?”

“No indeed Mr. Holland,” replied Anthoin. “I know it is so taught by preachers, who claim to understand the word of God, but it is not so. The soul that is dead remains in hell forever; but there are souls there who* have been deprived of their bodies while yet alive, who when their turn comes will be sent back to earth to inhabit another body.”

“Then theosophy is true?”

“Not at all. Theosophy is the basest kind of superstition. Souls are used for several bodies, but cannot converse with other souls while inmates of those bodies. Monte-banks, street-fakers and other would-be-attracters-of-public-attention claim a belief in theosophy, and claim their ability to talk with spirits; but like all faker's tricks, it is a fraud.”

“Then if souls are used repeatedly, why is it that we cannot remember what our other bodies did, and what has happened to the soul, as you remember what has happened to yours?”

“Because you think with your brain, and as it did not belong to the other bodies, you remember nothing of them or of the Spirit-land. Sometimes you remember them in your dreams when your bodily mind is asleep and your spiritual mind

*It will be noticed that I have used the pronoun “that,” for the dead soul, and “who,” for the living.—Author.

is awake, and it photographs itself upon the sleeping mind; but when you awake, you say, 'It's nothing but a dream,' and you believe it not.

"Then how is it you remember?" asked the doctor.

"My bodily mind is dead, I'll tell you of that after awhile, and I do my thinking with the mind of my soul. I broke away from the soul's home and returned to earth without being commanded. That will be explained as my story proceeds."

"Do souls have forms?"

"Yes. But they are invisible to mortal eyes. A soul can change its form, that is, when out of the body, to the image of any of the bodies it has ever had, or to a compound of several of them, but still it is invisible. This is a lengthy subject that could be discussed for hours; but the night is passing and if I wish to finish my story I must proceed. Some other time perhaps we will meet and discuss this subject."

"Go on by all means," said the doctor. "Tell us if you reached that beacon light; but say! Wasn't it on the spirit land?"

"You have guessed correctly. For passing through the Valley and Shadow of Death, I reached the guiding light, and found myself at the mouth of Hades, or upon the Spirit shore."

CHAPTER VI.

HADES.

“In Roman mythology, Hades is said to be a large cave, where-in, all departed spirits dwell; the good ones on the right, and the bad ones on the left. The idea has been hooted at by philosophers; atheists have said it was ridiculous; while believers in God, men who preach the gospel, have laughed at it and have claimed it was not orthodox enough for them. And yet this sentiment is more correct, than most beliefs upon the matter.

“On the farther border of the Valley and Shadow of Death there arises a perpendicular wall of rock, extending to right and left, losing itself on all sides in the darkness. The top is never seen—or the bottom either for that matter. There is an opening in the wall like the mouth of a cave; and in front of this opening is a ledge of rock where weary souls can rest before entering there old, yet new abode. Over the entrance are letters, formed of flaming jewels, spelling the word,

‘HADES.’

“Above this word hangs the beacon-light, sending its rays streaming through the darkness like an electric search-light. At the entrance stands the warden-angel, who, to every one who arrives, gives a permit, or passport, to enter Hades and on to the home of the soul; good or bad. The permit reveals, at once, the destiny of the soul. Very few need it revealed, however, for

each one generally knows where he deserves to go; and knows he will certainly go where he deserves. But there are some of the dead souls who try to blind themselves to the fact that they are going to hell; and when they get their passport they scan it minutely as though in hopes of it being a permit to enter heaven; but when they read it and find it is hell for which they are bound, some try to break past the sentinel, and rush out into the darkness. But they cannot pass. Others throw their passports away and hope to get into heaven some-how; but no one is allowed to pass the Pearly Gates without one, and all such are cast into hell.

“Although I had lost sight of other souls while coming through the Valley, there was no lack of them at the entrance. They were arriving all the time. I stood back on the ledge of rock, before passing the warden angel, and watched them come—happy souls, just from a life of Christian usefulness on earth; joyous souls, singing sweet refrains; merry souls, laughing and glad to meet some well remembered friend; weary souls, having wandered in the “Valley and Shadow of Death” for years before seeing the guiding rays of the beacon-light, and then so happy to reach that shelf of rock and rest; living and dead souls; good and bad souls; I watched them arrive. I recognized several of them, but they did not observe me as I was hid in a shadow. Finally I spoke to one of them. Like me, he still retained the likeness of his last body—an old playmate of mine when I, Merideth Kline, was a boy.

“ ‘Henry,’ I called. ‘Henry Thomas.’ He raised his head, and seeing the angelic look upon

his face I knew his destination was the Holy kingdom, but, yet I dared to show myself and speak to him for a moment. Upon my coming out of the shadow he recognized me, and together we went up to the angel, received our permits and passed into the Great Beyond.

“Just inside of the entrance is a broad stairway leading down, down, down. If a mortal could see that stairway how he would long to possess a part, if, not all of it; for it is of solid gold. Your greatest imagination cannot conceive of it. Large slabs of the precious metal form the steps; and each is engraved in the grandest style—figures of cherubim and seraphim; chariots drawn by dragons; animals known and unknown to mortals; birds and flowers; and many other beautiful things, designed in best artistic taste. Every fifth step—and there are over nine thousand—is broader than the others; and upon these are statues and statuettes of the most lovely kind, all of it gold, enameled in brilliant colors.

“Although so many souls are arriving all the time, there is no crowding upon the stair, it is so wide. My friend and I paused before each statue to admire and praise; and though, we had seen all of them several times before, they still seemed new, such was their loveliness. My friend knew, I’ve no doubt, my destination; but he said nothing about it, and loitered along the way with me, admiring this and examining that. Down we went, step after step, seeing greater beauty as we advanced, until we reached the bottom, and then there was a change.

“At the foot of the stair is a long passage,

and, although the stairs are brilliantly lighted, this passage is dark and gloomy—not black like the Valley and Shadow of Death, but feebly lighted—getting darker the farther you advance. It is damp and chilly too.

“Down this passage my friend and I walked. A shiver ran through us as some slimy, crawling thing glided past. Great things like spiders, only larger than earthly ones, were crawling on the walls; snakes and toads could be seen in the niches; blind bats whirled above our heads; and nameless things—nasty and loathsome, crept or ran or flew about us. We hastened on in hopes of passing the frightful objects; but they became more numerous and loathsome. We knew they could not hurt us, but yet we felt a dread of them—such a dread, that we were glad when we arrived at the end of the passage. There were two pair of gates there; those on the right made of pearl, and we knew, that heaven was beyond; and those on the left made of iron, and we knew that hell was on the other side of them. We were near our destination then and we had to part.

“Bidding me farewell with a shake of the hand, he walked up to the gates of pearl; they opened and he passed through. For a moment I caught sight of a gleam of brilliant light and heard a strain of sweet music; then the gates closed, and I turned toward the gates of iron. Willingly would I have fled; but I knew it was useless. Where could I go? I knew if I attempted to re-pass the nasty inhabitants of the passage; they would block my way and my attempt would be in vain. My fate was decided for me and I must

yield.

“Quickly going to the gates before my courage failed, they opened, and I passed into the howling clamor of the Hell of Souls,

CHAPTER VII.

ZELDEE.

“You have heard much talk of hell; but if you should chance to go there you'd be greatly surprised. You have been taught, that it was a lake of fire—a seething caldron of liquid souls, hissing, shrieking, groaning and cursing. There are all of these noises there and many more; but the other part is incorrect.

“A soul is a substance invisible to mortal eyes; and yet has form and passion. I know it is denied by philosophers as well as by theologian, but it is true never-the-less. Robert Ingersoll, the great atheist, has said, ‘There is no hell,’ or something to that effect, but that does not alter the fact of there being one. What is remorse but hell? Remorse of the bodily conscience is hell on earth; and remorse of the soul is hell beyond the grave, even if there was no place for remorseful souls to dwell. But there is a place—a terrible place, ‘Prepared for the devil and his angels,’ ruled over by Satan and guarded by legions of devils. A mad-house might be termed a hell in miniature; but if we were to combine a thousand of them and place all of their

howling maniacs in one large room, we then would have but a faint conception of what hell is.

“On the face of every soul in hell remorse is pictured. There is not a one of them who has not been to heaven, and now remembers its grandeurs and the holy peace they knew while there. Comparing it with their present abode, this dark and dreary infernal region, where hope comes not and love is not known, except the baser passions, is it a wonder that they know remorse? Idleness is another curse of hell. The souls there have nothing to do, nothing but think—think of their vile deeds, think of the Heaven they have lost, think of what surrounds them, think, yes think. Do you know what it is to think? Not thoughts of fame, not aspirations, not to plan, not anticipations; I don't mean that kind of thinking at all; I mean thoughts without an aim, thinking on one thing, over and over, until that thought becomes a monotony, and that monotony, a madness. Thus it is in hell. Millions of souls are there with no occupation, nothing to keep them from thinking. There is no sleeping there, no oblivion, no forgetfulness. The dead souls are doomed eternally to this—souls of men and women, dead; that is, will have no other body; but are living in hell forevermore. With the souls that are not dead, those that will have bodies again, it is not so bad; for they have expectations if no hope. Their hell consists principally in seeing the misery of others. I was of this more favored lot; and in fact, was more favored than the rest of them.

“Scarcely had I passed though the gates, when I heard a voice, I had heard before, saying, ‘So

you've come at last. How long you were, I have almost regretted leaving you to come alone.'

"Turning I beheld the woman, or soul, of my dream—the same exquisite form; the same lovely face; and the same beautiful, but maddening eyes. I knew her then. I had seen her once before my dream as I had seen her then. It was 'Zeldee, the Devil's Daughter.' It is useless to describe her now; I did that sufficiently once before. As I looked at her then, those eyes again took possession of me; and I shuddered, for I knew her history. I had seen her several times in other forms than that of Zel-dee; but only once before my dream in that.

"Beelzebub the king of devils was very angry when he heard of the advent on earth of Jesus the Son of God; and filled with jealousy he quickly left his throne of Darkness, and came to earth to superintend the destruction of Christ. He first sent his servants to tempt Him in every form, but without avail, they could not make Him sin; and then he tried; and you know the story of that tempting, how repeatedly he offered Him great things, and how repeatedly the God-man refused them, and drove back the temptor.

"Then Satan fled; but ere he returned to hell, he took the form of a man and went into another country, and made his way to the palace of the king. Here he represented himself as an ambassador from the far East; and told such straightforward tales, (the devil is a great liar) that he was believed. While at the palace he met the vergin daughter of the king and was often with her alone. He remained there but a few days; but when he left, the king's daughter was a vergin no

more. The servants of the king sought high and low for the ambassador; and had they found him, his life would have been required for his deed. But the ambassador had the form of the devil once more, and was invisible to them. So it came about that the devil became the father of a daughter; though the king had her killed immediately after birth; but her soul still lives, and the devil calls her 'Zeldee.'

"Unlike other souls she has the power to go when and where she pleases; thus she was able to appear to me in what I've always termed my dream. I realize now that it was not my physical eyes that saw her, but the eyes of my soul. She has her earthly bodies too, like all other souls that are not dead; so when I entered hell I recognized her, not only as the woman of my dream, but also as a soul I had seen in hell before; and one I had seen the body of on earth several times; and often we had been thrown together and our lives had blended. Although she retained the reason of her soul while in the body, she never divulged her secret; so it was never known except to souls that the devil had a daughter.

"Knowing her history, as I did, from beginning to end; when she began to talk to me and tell me again how she loved me I knew it was useless to resist and yielding to her seductive charms I was led away into the heart of hell by Zeldee."

For sometime, the doctor and preacher had been too interested to interrupt the narrator, but in the last few minutes it had slowly dawned upon them that it was broad day-light. And although they would willingly have had Anthoin pro-

long his narrative, they knew it was time to depart; so asking him to skip minor details, and come to the point and end of the story as soon as possible, they settled themselves in their chairs again, and prepared to listen to the close, and afterward to question.

Marcus Anthoin, thought a moment, and then said, "I hardly know how to shorten, without spoiling the tale; but I know you wish to be gone, that is quite natural, so I will do the best I can. Zeldee took me under her special care; and showed me things in hell I had never seen before. If she went up to the throne of her father, I went too; if she wandered to the farthest bounds of the kingdom, I was by her side. We were continually together. She would never let me leave her. Those eyes, that had haunted me so on earth, had the old power over me, and kept me under the control of their owner. She was of a jealous disposition. I suppose this accounts for her excessive watchfulness. I was not sorry for her attention, however, as my lot was made more bearable by it. It was something to divert my mind from the misery around me.

"She was almost constantly telling me of her love and begging me to love her in return. One day when she had been more passionate than usual, and had thrown herself into my arms with that careless recklessness that characterized her, (I held her willingly. Who would not have done so?) I asked her, 'If you love me as you say you do, what will you do when one of us is sent back to earth to inhabit another body?'

"She lay motionless for a minute, and then

sprang from my arms and shrieked, 'What will I do? Nothing. I tell you it shall not be. Do you think I lured you here for nothing? Do you want to go back and leave me?'

"'No, no,' I hastened to reply, trying to soothe her. 'I assure you I don't want to go without you; and 'twould grieve me as much if you went as it would you if I went.' I was telling the truth; for I knew what hell would be if she was not there to amuse me.

"She looked searchingly at me for a moment and then said, 'Then you do love me.' I did not deny it. She gave me another searching look and then came close to me, took me by the hand and said, 'Come.' It was not necessary that she should have taken me by the hand to lead me, had she but looked, I would have been compelled to follow; but in her excitement I suppose she forgot her power. Through hell she led me, directly past her father's throne, he laughed when he saw us, a laugh that was more of a roar. To the farthest bounds of hell she went, and I followed. There was the black wall I'd often seen before—a wall so black that not an object could be seen upon it. I was about to stop; but she kept straight on. Noticing my astonishment she laughed and said, 'You are just like the majority of the other poor souls. You think this is a wall, but you are mistaken. It is nothing but darkness that is so thick no light can penetrate it. Even if other souls knew it, I don't think they would venture to do what you and I are going to do, that is, pass through it.'

"As she spoke we passed into the darkness. There was the blackness of the Valley of the Shadow

of Death and the stillness of it also. I certainly should not have ventured into it alone, but Zeldee seemed to be perfectly familiar with the way, for she steadily advanced. I had heard of souls, who had wandered aimlessly about in this darkness for years, trying to find their way back to earth, but who had finally given it up and gone toward the beacon-light, as soon as they saw its rays, arriving at Hades very much exhausted. I had no doubt, in spite of Zeldee's calmness, but that, that would be the way with us. I might have resisted my conductor had I been able to resist; for although her eyes were invisible in that darkness she still held me by the hand and hence she ruled my will. Just as I had about nerved myself to make a slight remonstrance, and was about to ask her to return to Hades, if she could, a faint streak of light loomed up before us; this became wider and wider until we immersed into the light that lights the earth.

“You see gentlemen how difficult it is to shorten the tale; but it must be done I know. First, I'll tell you Zeldee's plan to keep us from separating. When we reached the earth, which no other souls had ever been able to do, she proposed, we should flit through space, from town to town, and country to country, until we found a couple, a man and wife, who were dying; and whose ends would come near the same time. She proposed, when the bodies were vacated by their former souls, that we should enter them; and by our superior will power and activity, force the worn out forms to do our will. I had little hope for the success of the plan; but yet was willing to try it.

“We found what we wanted in New Orleans.

A man and his wife were wasting away. The man was about seventy-five and the woman seventy years of age. Their disease (their souls were tired and needed rest, that was all) had baffled the doctors, who had said they could not live but a few days; so we determined to remain near by, to enter as soon as their souls had left the bodies, providing they departed about the same time. We did not have to wait long; the end came the following night. Two sons and a daughter of the dying couple; the husband of the daughter; the doctor and several of the neighbors were there when the end came.

"The woman died first. One of her sons held her in his arms until she breathed her last; then he laid her gently down, and brushed a tear from his eye; while the daughter sobbed aloud. My courage would have failed me then, had not Zeldee been ruling my will. Five minutes later, the old man opened his lips as though to speak, but he only gasped and closed his eyes.

"The doctor said, 'He is gone.'

" 'Now,' said Zeldee. And I immediately entered the body of the man and she that of the woman. I exerted all my will; but at first the tired heart refused to beat; but it yielded at last and blood began to course through the veins. Zeldee's task was more difficult; but she finally succeeded. Of course everybody was greatly surprised at Marcus Anthoin and his wife returning to life after the doctor had pronounced them dead. But we cared nothing for that. We would have preferred to have gotten into younger bodies; but determined to make the best of our lot. Although we had the ability

to enter the bodies, we did not have the power to leave them except by killing them, or in dreams, when we slept. In a weeks time we were able to leave our room. I had stopped calling her Zeldee; and called her by the woman's name, 'Antonette'.

"We lived in New Orleans for a year, during which time we quarreled with our sons and daughter. Ha, ha, our sons and daughter! They were nothing to us, so what need we care. Marcus Anthoin was not a wealthy man as the world takes it; but he had some property. This we converted into cash and left the town. After going from one Southern city to another we came here, about two months ago, and I became ill. We rented this house ready furnished, and here you find us.

My malady, gentlemen, is a tired soul. This body, as you know, is exhausted; so my soul has to furnish strength for it; that, with the burden of the secret, I have just disclosed, was more than I could have stood much longer; but now with the secret removed, I, perhaps, can live a few years more.

"Now gentlemen, I must thank you for your kindness and patience in waiting until the end of the story."

CHAPTER VIII.

INTERLOCUTION.

The story was done, and the day was advancing; yet Anderson and Holland did not leave. They were interested in the old man and in the tale he had told. There were questions to be asked and questions to be answered; so they stayed and plied the narrator with the questions, receiving answers, that did not surprise them now—they were past that. They often wondered if what he said was true, or only the fancies of a disordered mind; but his eye was so clear and his answers so straightforward and intelligent, that they ceased to wonder and took all he said as the truth; even though it blasted the theories they had heard all their lives.

For the benefit of the reader we will give a few of the questions and answers, but bear in mind; although we tell, in part, the conversation, there were many breaks and interruptions; many questions asked that we do not record; and many discussions on the answers that it is not deemed necessary to print. We simply tell that part which will throw light on the after story.

“Are you content to be ruled thus, by another’s will?” asked Holland.

“I am not ruled by another’s will now,” replied Anthoin. “That rule ceased last night.”

“Do you mind telling how you freed yourself?” asked Anderson.

“Certainly not. I realized from the time I re-

turned to earth, that some day, Zeldee's rule would become irksome to me; and I began to devise some plan to escape. I reasoned, 'It is the strongest mind must rule.' So I studied philosophy and what was once called 'The black art and witchcraft,' but now termed, ventriloquism, mind reading, hypnotism and the like. It was easy to accomplish my object, knowing as I did, all the mysteries of the other world. Last night I realized for the first time that my will was strong enough to cope with hers; and I did not wait to break her power; and as soon as it was broken, I found I could easily make her obey me; so I did not hesitate to ask her to leave the room, when I desired it."

"Was there not some way, you could have resisted her when you was Merideth Kline, before she lured you into the Devil's pit?

"There were several, if I had but known them. One, the method I have already used; another, by being a devout Christian; and another, by possessing the Philosopher's Stone."

"If you had, had the Philosopher's stone in your possession, could you have baffled her successfully?"

"More easily than in any other way."

"But I thought this stone, of which we speak, was an imaginary one; and only reported to have power to turn into gold everything it touched."

"I know that is the general idea; but it is a mistaken one. It is true all baser metals are turned into gold by its touch; it is a real stone with that power; and the person with it in his keeping can become immensely wealthy by using it properly, and he also, can resist the devil or any of his

subjects."

"Is this stone in the possession of man, or is it hidden in the earth?"

"I cannot say. It was once possessed by an old Italian, who did not know its value, and, who sold it to a Frenchman for a mere song. What became of it after that I do not know. The Frenchman got killed in a duel a few months later. The stone may be lost and buried for all I know; but I intend to find it, if I live long enough."

"Perhaps it is in the possession of some one already."

"Then I'll get it from them."

"How?"

"I don't know that either. I'll buy it if I can, or trade for it, or perhaps I'll have to steal it, but I will have it if it is to be had."

They all laughed at this, for, although he spoke seriously, they imagined he intended it for a joke.

After many other questions, the two friends arose to go, assuring Anthoin that they had enjoyed his narrative, and expressed the hope of their meeting again.

"I also hope for that pleasure," replied he. "And let me thank you again for your kindness in listening to my story. I feel greatly relieved since divulging my secret, in fact I feel so much stronger, that, I think, I can accompany you to the outer door." So saying he arose from the bed and began to dress himself.

Anderson and Holland each said he was delighted to see him so much improved, and offered to assist him in dressing; but he declined saying

he was even stronger than he had supposed.

After dressing he called his wife, who entered immediately, and bid her to bid their friends, "Good bye." She was more pale than on the previous evening and her eyes were not so bright, which suggested that she had spent a sleepless night as well as themselves; and perhaps had listened to their conversation; but she did not betray it if she had. She followed them and her husband to the landing after asking them to remain to breakfast, which they politely declined to do.

Anthoin's demonish voice had not returned up to the time of the friends departure; owing, no doubt to his being governed now by his own will. He shook their hands at parting, as did his wife who informed them that the electric cars had been running, as usual, for an hour or more.

And so they parted, this man and wife, dead and yet alive; and the professional men, one of whom was feeling glad to go home to his wife and child; while the other had a strange feeling in his breast, one that was new to him and which he had felt for the first time when he held the old crone Antonette Anthoin by the hand. and saw those piercing eyes bent toward his face.

PART TWO.

ZELDEE'S REVENGE.

CHAPTER I.

FROM OUT THE NOOSE.

“There’s many a slip ’twix the cup and the lip,” is a saying old and true. Many a man has grasped the Goblet of Life and raised it to his lips to drink the pleasure thereof; but only found the dregs. Many a one has put out his hand to lay hold of the fortune that seemed within his reach; and drew it back empty. Many another has thought to win the “Idol of his Heart,” only to receive the “mitten” at the last moment. Many a time the Law has caught its criminal; only to lose him again before the sentence.

The Law had lost its criminal. But this time after the sentence had been passed; and just before the rope was around his neck. Everybody in the town was discussing it and surmising how the murderer could have escaped. Did he have help from the out-side? There was no evidence of it. Did he bribe the guards? They were trust-worthy men and not likely to receive bribes; and yet, the prisoner was gone, with no apparant means of escape. His cell had been found barred as usual and none of the guards had seen him pass, if they had they would have stopped him. But he was

gone, there was no doubt of that; and the scaffold which had been erected on the yesterday was still standing in the jail yard, and if it could feel, it no doubt, was feeling very much mortified, at being cheated out of its victim.

Telegrams had been sent in every direction giving a discription of the escaped prisoner; but he had not been recaptured. The description was as follows: "Age: seventy-five, very active for his age; heighth: five feet eight inches; hair: very white and long; white mustache and goatee; dressed in a gray suit of clothes, with negligee shirt, black cravat and rough canvass shoes." To this was added, that the governor offered two hundred dollars for his body; but even this did not find the missing man.

One of ths fast mail trains of the Southern Railway was speeding northward, with a shriek and a roar; dashing over bridges, whizzing over trestles, and breaking through the still evening air like a great fiery demon chasing the departing day.

In one of the coaches, amid the freight of human beings, sat a man that might have attracted attention had he shown himself from behind the paper he was reading. He was neatly dressed in a genteel suit of black; he wore a white shirt, a standing collar and a black necktie; an ordinary traveling cap covered his head; his shoes were nicely laced and well polished; but his appearance in this way is not what would have attracted attention; but, although his hair was black as that

of a man of twenty-five, his clean shaven face was wrinkled as that of a man of seventy. He was reading a paper, as we have already said, and a smile brightened his face as he read, until it looked almost boyish; and with a self-satisfied air he nestled more comfortably in his seat and went on with his reading. He was reading of the mysterious escape from prison of Marcus Anthoin, the wife murderer. And what were his thoughts?

In a doctor's office in Baltimore was seated a handsome man, presumably the doctor. He was a young man, evidently not over thirty, of medium height with well built frame. A well trimmed mustache covered his upper lip, while his soft blue eyes and dark waving hair gave to him the look of a poet. There was a touch of melancholy in his face—a sad thoughtful expression; and his eyes had a far away look as though he saw things in the future that other men could not see; but all this added to, rather than detract, from the personal beauty of Doctor William Anderson, if this was him; that was the name upon the plate on the door.

Any woman might have been proud to boast of the conquest of his heart. Many fair daughters of Eve had undertaken it, but without success thus far. He liked the ladies well enough; but as for loving them—well that was different. There was one woman he could have loved, but he did not even know her name, except that it was Gertrude.

About a year before the time of which we write she had passed his office while he was at his

window watching the passers-by. He was at once attracted by her face and determined to get a nearer view; so bringing his hypnotic power to bear upon her, (he was a noted hypnotist) he had the pleasure of seeing that it influenced her. Willing her to enter his office he turned from the window to receive her. She entered, and he found that his eyes had not deceived him. She was about eighteen and very small, scarcely over five feet in height; yet her form was perfect and her face angelic. She was one of those dainty little creatures, with sunny hair, laughing blue eyes, rosy cheeks, rosy lips and pearly teeth. Who would not have admired her? Not William Anderson. For when she stood before him, he was so lost in admiration, that he nearly lost his power over her; and only regained his presence of mind in time to renew it and motion her to be seated.

"Be natural," he told her, and began to talk on various subjects. He found her intelligent and able to converse on deeper topics than most women know. He did not detain her long, however, he thought, "Some one may enter at any moment and understand, or misunderstand in the wrong way, either would be disagreeable; so I'd better let her leave." But before she left he asked her for her name. She told him, "Gertrude."

"Gertrude what?" he asked her.

"I—I can't remember," she replied. "It seems to be Johnston, Johnson, Thompson or something like that. I don't know."

"Well I can easily find out," he thought, and opened the door for her to go; then he quickly closed it again. "Kiss me good bye before you

go," he said; but she hesitated before obeying. "I will it," he said; then she came forward, 'though her cheek flushed crimson, and gave him the sweetest kiss he had ever received. He allowed her to leave then; and released her from his power when she was nearly a block away. He was watching her from his window, and saw her turn and look back as soon as he had released her; then she went on again.

He had never seen her since and had never learned her name. We have said, "He was sitting in his office." He was thinking of that remarkable story told to him and his friend Holland, while in Birmingham, by Marcus Anthoin; and said half aloud, "I must be going crazy; for ever since I read of his killing his wife, I have seen those eyes as he described them and the woman too as he described her. She is too brazen for me, but those eyes, those eyes." and he placed his hands before his own eyes as though to shut out the sight of those piercing black ones.

Then taking a paper which lay upon the table beside him; and turning on more gas, he proceeded to read. The first article he saw was headed,

"Escaped Criminal."

"Wife murderer Anthoin escapes from his prison on the night before the day set for his execution."

He started when he saw the heading; but read the article through; and then said, "That fellow, Anthoin is no fool." Just then he heard a light tap upon his office door and called, "Come in."

The door opened; he sprang to his feet in an instant, and said, "Gertrude."

CHAPTER II.

WOMEN'S LOVE AND WOMAN'S WITS.

“What would a woman not do for love? It may be true, that she often transfers it from one to another, but it is also true, that when she really loves, there is scarcely anything she would not do for her adored.

“ ‘Changeful woman, constant never;
He’s a fool who trusts her ever;
For her love doth ever go,
Like the waters, to and fro.’ ”

“Dear old Hugo! How he liked to quote that verse of his illustrious name sake. There is a deal of truth in the verse too; and it suits my case exactly. I loved Hugo as well as any woman loves her husband; but now he is dead, and been dead six months, I can’t go moping around like I am nearly dead too when I am so full of life, I can’t rest unless there is something exciting going on. That handsome young doctor I saw the other day would be just the fellow to keep me from being dull. I wonder how I can get acquainted with him? I do believe I am nearly in love with him already. Let me see— what did they say his name was, er Anderson? That is a common enough name; and William, that is the commonest of common; but they don’t sound so bad when used together: Doctor William Anderson, that is alright. And I’ll bet, he is the proper caper.”

Thus soliloquized young Mrs. Fleming, as she

sat before a cheerful fire in her cosy sitting room. The bit of American slang, with which her monologue ended, and which is not becoming in any one, sounded unusually rough, when coming from her pretty mouth; for she soliloquized aloud. It is strange how many people do this. Can it be that they love to hear the sound of their own voices? Or is it an unconscious habit, which if you told them of, it would be hard to convince them it was true? The latter is probably nearer right. At least it was so in the present instance; for when a lady friend, who had entered unperceived, and who had heard most of the revery, began to laugh, she was honestly surprised; not so much at her unexpected presence, as at what could have caused her mirth.

"Dear Gertrude, when did you come? I'm so glad to see you. Take off that hat and wrap and come to the fire; and tell me, for goodness sake, what you are laughing at."

"At you my dear Edna and at nothing else," replied the bewitching Gertrude, who has been described in the preceeding chapter. She was a great friend of Mrs. Edna Flemming, having known her all her life. She was two years younger than her friend and had a much purer mind; but they loved each other like sisters; neither of them had ever had a sister, or a brother either for that matter, being the only children of their respective parents, and having been neighbors nearly all their lives, they had played together when children and had continued their intimacy in womanhood. It was a common thing for Gertrude to "drop in and spend the day," with Edna, and some-

times she would stay several days. This time she had come with the intention of doing the latter.

"Do I look so ridiculous, that you must stand there and nearly kill yourself laughing at me?" Asked the pretty widow, with pretended anger.

"I laugh at your words and not at your looks, Sweet One," answered her girl friend.

"My Words?"

"Yes, your words. For you must know you have the very bad habit of thinking aloud; and I have had the pleasure of listening to your love revery. Now if you will be so kind as to tell me all about this doctor you are in love with, we may be able to devise some way for you to get acquainted with him. You see I heard it all."

The widow joined in the laugh against herself and said, "You bad, bad girl, you should have closed your ears and not have listened to a word. But no, you stood there as still as a mouse, and heard all my secrets. I'm real mad at you. I am." But her laugh belied her words; so failing in her sham seriousness she caught the dainty figure of her little friend in her arms, and nearly smothered her with kisses. Then placing her unceremoniously in an easy rocker, near the fire, she drew up another for herself and sat down with the air of one who says, "Well, what's next?"

"Now tell me about your doctor," said Gertrude arranging her disordered hair.

"There's not much to tell," replied Edna. "But I'll tell you all I know. The other day, I think it was Monday, I went to see Bertha, I suppose you know she has been unstylish enough as to have a baby, (its a boy) and she is awfully proud of it; so

is her husband; well while I was there the doctor came. He bowed to me, and of course I bowed. Bertha was too much occupied with the baby to think about introducing us, she got out of it afterward by saying, she 'thought we knew each other.' She said it was Dr. William Anderson and gave me the address of his office. That's all there is about him, except, he's very handsome and I'm in love with him; or want to be."

"How old is he?" asked Gertrude.

"About twenty-nine or thirty."

"And handsome you say? Describe him and tell me where his office is."

The widow described the doctor as well as she could remember, and she did him full justice; then she told his office address. Gertrude Robson started, for the locality was the same, in which she had had a peculiar dream. Our readers remember this same young lady being hypnotized by Anderson, and what followed. She had always looked upon that incident as a dream; as she could account for it in no other way. She supposed she had, in some mysterious way, slept while walking along the street, and had continued to walk, like a somnambulist, dreaming as she went; for she was considerably farther down the street when she came to herself, than when she lost consciousness. To the widow's query of why she started she replied by telling her of that dream, and that she had felt afraid ever since then, to walk along that street alone. But Edna had done a very impolite thing, that is, failed to listen to her friend; and had only heard her in a vague way. A project had entered her brain and absorbed all of her thoughts. As her

friend ceased speaking she clapped her hands and cried:

"That will be the very thing; and if I don't have him adoring me inside of a week then he must be adamant."

"What will be the very thing?" asked Gertrude, surprised at her friend's words. "My dream?"

"No dear," replied Edna with a smile. "I really must beg your pardon; but such a capital idea entered my head, while you was talking, that I forgot you and everything, except that. Now if you will tell your story again I promise I'll listen to every word."

" 'Shakespeare never repeats,' you know; then why should I? Besides it is nothing worth repeating. I'm more interested in that capital idea of yours, than in what I was telling you; so please let me know what it is. How are you going to persuade the doctor to love you?" And Gertrude looked very interested indeed. Sensible girl that she was, she readily over-looked her friend's rudeness.

"And you are not mad with me at all for being so ill-mannered?"

"Not at all Edna. But do pray tell me this idea of yours before my curiosity drives me mad."

"Well it is this. I will pretend to— But you will help me won't you?" And the widow looked inquiringly at Gertrude.

"Of course I will," answered the little lady. "You knew that before you asked. Why didn't you keep on? What are you going to pretend to do?"

"Pretend I am sick, very ill, delirious; and you

as my friend, staying with me for a few days, will get alarmed and send or go for a doctor. That doctor will be Dr. Anderson. As soon as he arrives you will take him to my room where he will prescribe for me; and where I will rave, and show off charms to the best advantage."

"But wont that be a little immodest?" queried Gertrude, who shrank from anything low or vulgar.

"No you little goose. Isn't he a doctor? And as such doesn't he often go into ladies' rooms to pay professional visits? Besides I am not really well, I have had a fever all day. All I'll have to do is to pretend to be much worse than I am. He'll think I have had a chill and the fever is making me delirious; and he'll give me a fever powder, which instead of doing me harm will do me good. After that he will call two or three times to see if I'm getting along nicely; then if I play my part well he will continue his visits in a friendly way and the game will be won."

Gertrude was not convinced by her friends words, that it was right to practice deception, even to win a lover; or that it was wise to lay aside womanly modesty. And she said as much, adding that she would assist her all she could, however, for she did not wish her scruples to stand in the way of a friend's happiness and especially when that friend was Edna. The widow replied by calling her a "Dear little old goody, goody," and saying, "I'm so glad you are going to lay aside your feelings and help an old friend to win her heart's desire. And I'll try not to make you blush while the doctor is here."

At this they both laughed; for they well remembered a time during the life time of Hugo Flemming, when the married woman's free ways with her husband had made her young friend's cheek burn with blushes of shame.

They dropped the subject of the doctor soon, and began to converse on other matters, the latest fads of society; the new styles of hats and dresses for the coming season; and such things so dear to feminine hearts.

While they were talking, Aunt Dinah, an old negress who had lived with the Flemming's nearly all her life, and who had come to cook for "Marse Hugo" after he got married, and still lived with his widow, entered the room and said, "Bless my life, if I aint done ring dat ole bell all to pieces an' yo' aint heared it yet! Suppah's ready Miss Edna an' on de table gettin' cole. Bless my life, if dare aint Miss Gertrude! I's so glad you's come. How is you honey?"

"I'm quite well I thank you Aunt Dinah." replied the lady addressed, smiling at the old woman's quaint words.

"Bless my life, if yo' aint lookin' well! I tole Car'line de udder day 'Bless my life, if Miss Gertrude Robson dont git prettier ebbery day she lives!' But bofe of yo' had better come along while suppah's fit to eat." So saying the old woman left the room followed by the two pretty women, one of whom was destined to win the heart of William Anderson.

After supper Mrs. Flemming told Aunt Dinah that she wished to speak with her as soon as the dishes were cleared away; and then repaired to the

sitting room with her friend. It was not long before the negress put in her appearance, and began to smile; for the expression on the faces before her, told plainly enough, that there was fun to be had.

"What is it Miss Edna?" she asked, her smile broadening into a grin.

"Aunt Dinah," the widow began. "Do you know where Dr. Anderson's office is?"

"No Miss Edna, neber heard of it."

"But you could find it if I told you the number and street, couldn't you?"

"Bless my life! Honey yo' know I cant read."

"That's alright," interposed Gertrude "I'll go with her. I'm not afraid."

"And if it is not exactly proper, why a breach of propriety is allowed when some one is very sick." And Edna laughed heartily at her joke. Gertrude laughed too; so did the old negress, who laughed out of sympathy, not knowing what the joke was.

"Now Aunt Dinah," said her mistress. "I'm going to tell you what's up; but don't you ever breathe a word of it to anybody, if you do I'll be awfully angry."

"Bless my life! Miss Edna I love yo' too well to make yo' angry. I wont say a word to a soul."

"Well then, we are going to play a little joke on our friend Dr. Anderson. I'm going to pretend I'm sick, and you and Miss Gertrude will go for this doctor. He'll come and prescribe for me and afterwards when we tell him how we have fooled him, we will have a laugh at him. Do you understand?"

"Ho! Ho! Bless my life! Wont dat be fun?" And Aunt Dinah held her sides and laughed as though it was the best joke she had ever heard of.

Mrs. Flemming arose and said, "I'd better go to my room, and prepare to act my part. Gertrude come and help me. Aunt Dinah go and tell Caroline that you and Miss Gertrude are going for a doctor; that I am very sick and must not be disturbed by her or any one until you return. Tell her to be ready to open the door for you when you come back."

"Yes Miss Edna." And the old negress vanished still laughing.

"We could have taken the latch key and opened the door for ourselves when we returned, and not have let Caroline know anything about your being sick," said Gertrude.

"Yes, and what would Dr. Anderson think if he came with you and found that I had been left alone, and I delirious from fever? No, he must see Caroline if he comes with you, that is certain. But you come and help me get ready." So saying she led the way to her chamber, where her friend helped her disrobe. Selecting her prettiest night dress she put it on; and loosening her lovely hair, she let it fall over her shoulders, contrasting nicely with her fair skin and snowy night-gown. Then she bid her friend to go and bring the doctor, laughing as she took a tragic attitude, and said, "Give me William or give me death."

In the lower passage Gertrude found Aunt Dinah waiting for her, and together they left the house—two agents, one black, the other white, sent forth to lure an unsuspecting victim into the snares of Cupid.

CHAPTER III.

A ROYAL FLUSH.

In a former chapter we described a man who was traveling northward on a Southern Railway train. At Washington City that man alighted and went to a hotel, where he registered as Lawrence Q. Mayo; ordered a good supper, and engaged the best room in the house for the night. He seemed to have plenty of money which he spent freely; therefore he was an object of interest. There were three men in particular, three United States senators, who were interested in him. They watched his every movement; and when he returned to the lobby from the dining room, one of them accosted him, introduced himself and asked if he ever played poker; as some friends and himself were about to have a friendly game, and thought perhaps, he being a stranger, he might be lonesome and would like to join them to while the time away.

Lawrence Mayo, or Marcus Anthoin as our readers will already have imagined it was, replied that he was not much of a poker player, but as he had nothing else to do, and as they had been so kind as to ask him, he did not mind playing a few games. So it came about that Anthoin and the three senators seated themselves around a table in the room of one of the latter. The first senator having introduced Anthoin to the others, cigars and spirits were produced; but our old acquaintance refused both, though the others smoked and drank freely.

As they drank, their tongues became loosened and they talked rather too much to pay much attention to the game, so the small amounts staked were easily won by Anthoin.

"They are baiting me," he thought. "But I'll watch them and beat them at their own trick."

Their gay conversation interested him extremely, especially one part of it, in which he joined. One of the senators, speaking of a friend of his, said, "He is a duced funny fellow, although an American by birth, he hates America with all his heart; and has been living in France, for the last ten years. He has bought a lovely place near the river Rhone, and has built a regular palace. I was there nearly two years ago and was fairly dazzled. He use to be a comparatively poor man, but now he is immensely wealthy. Where he got his money nobody knows but himself, and no amount of coaxing will induce him to tell. He said when I asked him about it, 'I thought you would ask that before you left; well, I dont mind telling you. I found the philosopher's stone one day; and ever since then I have had all the gold I have desired.' I laughed at his joke though I felt very much disappointed; as I really had thought he was going to tell me a secret that others had tried in vain to make him tell."

"Maybe he told you the truth and you didn't know it," said Anthoin, determined to learn all he could of the man who claimed to possess that wonderful stone, which he had told Anderson and Holland that he intended to get.

"Maybe he did," replied the senator. "For whatever it was must have been equal to it any way." And he took the cards that were just then

handed to him. It was his time to deal.

But Anthoin was not satisfied, he continued to interrogate him until he had learned the man's name and where upon the banks of the Rhone his home could be found.

"You seem to be interested in my friend," said the senator, beginning to deal the cards. "If you wish I will give you a letter of introduction to him; then if you are ever in that country you can call upon him, and make his acquaintance."

"I accept your offer," replied Anthoin, noticing at the same time, that all of the men had ceased drinking and were narrowly watching the cards that were being dealt to them. "Please write it before we play, here is pen and paper," handing him a fountain pen and a sheet of paper, and then adding to himself, "I must get that letter first, for this will be the last game. They are preparing to 'do me' now. These senatorial thieves will cheat here as well as in the senate."

His mind was busily employed, while the senator was writing the letter, devising some plan to frustrate them; and a smile spread over his features as one occurred to him that would be an effective, as well as an amusing one, if he could carry it out.

The senator handed him the letter unfolded, but he did not read it, he thanked him and folding the sheet he put it in his pocket-book. The eyes of the players glistened as they saw the roll of bank notes the book contained for they thought by some means they might become possessors of it. As Anthoin replaced the book in his pocket a cry like a woman's, seemed to come from under the table and then a woman's voice said, "Take your feet off

of me. Wont you?" In an instant every head was under the table looking for the owner of the voice; but no one was to be seen. They raised their heads and looked at each other in great perplexity. The cards, that had been dealt before the letter was written, were lying face downward upon the table, and it had taken the old man but an instant to exchange his for those of the dealer. When their heads were raised he looked as perplexed as the others, for a moment, and then began to laugh.

"Gentlemen," he said. "It's a little joke of mine. I am a ventriloquist."

The others laughed then, but it sounded rather forced, and they looked at him with suspicion, which his laugh, with its demon's ring, did not allay.

The play began again, and Anthoin saw in an instant, that his guess had been correct, for the cards he held was a ROYAL FLUSH. He looked at the dealer and saw astonishment written on every lineament of his face, and he could hardly repress a smile. The other two players had been looking at their cards at the moment and had failed to see the look of astonishment; and such was their confidence in the ability of their confederate, that they had no idea he could make a mistake.

One of them asked, "Is there a limit to the betting?"

"Of course not," replied the other two. "We have not been limiting it thus far, so why should we begin now? And besides, 'There is no limit among gentlemen.' "

The betting began, and went higher and higher, each wishing to have as much as possible on

the table before the call was made. The dealer kept with the rest, he was the one to win, he had "stacked" the cards to that end and although he saw he had made a mistake somehow, yet he had an excellent hand and was confident of winning. His cards were all spades and were the nine, ten, Jack, Queen and King. There was not one chance in a thousand of his losing, so he thought, and bet accordingly. Each man raised his bet until there was nearly ten thousand dollars on the table.

Then the showing came and Anthoin won.

For a moment the defeated sharpers remained dumb-founded. They had been tricked they knew. But how? They could not tell. Then maddened by their loss and by the whiskey they had drank, with one accord they arose to attack the victor. But they remained standing motionless by the table. Anthoin had performed the wonderful feat of hypnotizing three men at a time.

Collecting the money, he bowed sarcastically to the living statues, and left the room. An hour later he released the senators from his hypnotic influence, and the next morning he took an early train for Baltimore.

CHAPTER IV.

A VOICE IN THE DARK.

When Dr. William Anderson recognized the lady, who entered his office, as the lady he had hypnotised a year before, he called her "Gertrude," but realizing his mistake in betraying himself, his face flushed, and he hastened to make an excuse.

"I beg your pardon," he said, as she started back, her face getting white and red by turns. "I had a lady friend upon my mind as you entered, and you resemble her very much, so for the moment I thought it was her. Pray be seated," he added, noticing her paleness, and wondering if she was going to faint, and what brought her there.

She took the seat offered her, thinking at the same time, how strange it was that this should be the man of her dream; and then her paleness left her and she blushed to the roots of her hair, as she thought, perhaps, what she had called a dream might have been a reality, and that she had been in this office before and had really kissed this man. Anderson handed her a glass of water, which she took, and thanked him.

Having drank it, she said, "I feel better now. Your mistake was quite natural; but it startled me as my name is Gertrude. But I must tell you my business." Here was a trial for her, and one that she had not thought of before. Although there was a great mystery connected with her and this man, for she did not believe the excuse he had

given her; and although she had never seen him before this night unless the dream was real, she had to admit to herself, that she loved him. Admitting this, it was indeed a trial to tell him her errand and take him to her friend's to be subjected to the power of the fair widow's charms, and perhaps, to learn to love her. But she summoned courage to do what she thought was her duty to her friend, and tell him of Edna's illness. He said he would go, and would 'phone at once for a carriage.

"Very well," she said, rising, though she felt very weak, "Then I will go back to my friend. You remember the address?"

"Yes, I remember," he answered. "But you had better wait and go back in the carriage, unless you have a conveyance at the door."

"It is not a long way, and the walk will do me good. Besides there is an old negro woman on the outside, waiting for me. I am much obliged to you all the same."

"Then if you are going to walk I will walk too," said the doctor, putting on his overcoat, and taking his hat and gloves from the table.

Gertrude was delighted to have him accompany her, but still she said, "You'll find it a cold walk doctor. You had better wait for the carriage."

Anderson laughed. The prospect of a walk with this fair woman had made him supremely happy; though the idea of his falling in love with her had not occurred to him. His reply to her remark was, "If you can stand the cold, why surely I can, and if you have no objections to my going

with you, I prefer to walk."

"I have no objections, certainly. It was of your comfort I was thinking," and she colored deeply as she said it. And Anderson wondered "Why?"

They left the office together—she, one of the few women of today with mind unsullied by ungodly vanity; one of the few who would think themselves debased if they appeared in public with bare shoulders and arms; one of the few, we might almost say, who place virtue above diamonds and chastity above great possessions; she who believed in God and Heaven with the old time simple faith, and strove to do His will; and felt she was sinning greatly by helping to deceive the doctor, even though she did it for a friend—and he, the cold stern man of the world, who in spite of the kind talks and warm letters of his friend Holland upon the subject; and in spite of the assertions of Marcus Anthoin, could not believe in an immortal soul. He was not an atheist, for he believed in God; but what God was, or where he was, he never troubled himself to think. But as they were not likely to talk about religion, there was nothing to keep their walk from being a pleasant one.

"Come Aunt Dinah," called Gertrude to the old negress, who had remained outside for no better reason than the one she had given the fair girl when she asked her to enter with her.

"No Miss Gertrude, you go on in, I aint gwine to put any foots on dem marble steps." But she had been kept waiting in the cold so long, that she had heartily repented of not entering.

"Law Miss Gertrude, I done thought you had

slipped out an' gone back a nudder way."

"I did keep you waiting a long time Dinah, but we'll walk fast now, to make up for it."

Suiting her actions to her words, she started off at a quick walk, the doctor by her side, and the negress following. Anderson offered Gertrude his arm, which she took, and a thrill ran through her as she touched it; and he also felt a feeling unknown to him, as he felt the touch of the tiny hand. Zeldee, with her maddening eyes, had lost her power over him, it seemed, and he remembered her no more. He began to talk with the sweet creature at his side on subjects of little importance, and yet, they unconsciously slackened their speed to the great consternation of the poor, old woman, who was nearly frozen. Slower and slower they walked, until Dinah thought they were going to stop; and she looked to see them turn and go back at any moment.

She had kept at a respectful distance and had not heard their conversation, but she had said to herself, "If dat aint a spoony couple, den I neber seen one."

Just as she had about determined to get nearer them and ask them to walk a little faster, they passed a dark alley, out of which a man emerged, and said as he passed, "Good evening Dr. Anderson."

The doctor started violently, and looked back. The man was in a shadow, where but a ray of light fell upon him; but by that glimmer Anderson recognized him. With the recognition and the sound of the voice Zeldee's power over him returned, and the walk was no longer a pleasure.

Gertrude noticed the change in him, but said nothing about it. Instinctively they increased their speed, and soon reached the house of Widow Fleming, to the intense gratification of Dinah, who said to herself, "I's so glad dat man spoke to dem an' woke dem up. I wonder who he was?"

If she had been told, she would have been "none the wiser;" but our readers would, for the man was Marcus Anthoin.

CHAPTER V.

THE COMEDY OF HEARTS.

Love is often a melo-drama, sometimes it is a tragedy, but seldom a comedy; yet there are times when it is made even that. We are about to relate the events of one of those times.

The door of Mrs. Flemming's house was opened by Caroline, and Gertrude ushered the doctor up the broad stairs to her friend's room. As soon they had entered the house they heard groans and incoherent talk. This became more loud and distinct the nearer they approached Edna's chamber. Upon entering it, they found its occupant indeed a vision of beauty. Her cheeks were red as though flushed by fever, but truly caused by pinching, and close proximity to the fire. Her magnificent hair falling in bewildering disorder over her shoulders, seemed to make a frame for the picture—her face. Her eyes shone brightly, and her teeth showed be-

tween her rosy lips, like two rows of pearls, adding beauty to the picture. Her clothing was in disorder, being open in front, showing her snowy throat and one ravishing breast, to great advantage. She was seated on the edge of her bed, with one knee clasped in her arms, rocking herself to and fro, groaning and talking aloud. The position she was in had a tendency to draw her night-dress from over one of her shapely limbs, and it was revealed nearly to the knee.

Gertrude was astonished; and she blushed until her cheeks looked like a summer garden of roses, and the words, "Oh! Edna," were spoken ere she knew it. But the doctor seemed not to notice his patient's appearance; in fact he seemed to be pondering deeply. It looked as if there was something of more importance on his mind, than the illness or charms of Mrs. Edna Flemming. And there was, something of more importance, to him at least. He had scarcely seen the widow; for Zeldee's eyes were absorbing his attention. He asked Gertrude, "How long has she been like this?" But without any curiosity or interest in his voice; and when she answered truthfully, "I don't know. She was not as bad as this when I left," he seemed to hear her voice, but not to understand her words. Mechanically he placed his thermometer between Edna's lips, and when she spit it out and went on with her raving, he quietly replaced it in his pocket, and wrote a prescription which he handed to Gertrude, saying:

"Give her one of these powders as soon as you can get them, and the other in the morning. I will call again to-morrow. Keep her as quiet as

you can." Then he quickly crossed the room and opened the door. "Good night," he said, and he was gone.

Aunt Dinah who was at the foot of the stairs showed him out, and received to her query of, "How is she?" only the gruff answer, "About the same."

The door closed behind him with a bange and then from Edna's room there came peal after peal of laughter. Gertrude never smiled while her friend laughed. She stood in the center of the room with a sad expression on her face. Her friend thought it was caused by her being shocked at her disheveled appearance. But she was mistaken, for Gertrude was thinking of Dr. Anderson. "Who could it be who had such an influence over him, that even the sound of his voice would make him forget everything else." There was something mysterious about it too. A doctor does not often go into a sick room and leave without examining the patient, yet that is what had just occurred. If it was some trouble weighing on his mind, and the sound of that voice had recalled it to him, how gladly she would have helped him bear it. But there was no way for her to ascertain the truth of the matter; so her mind was racked with conjectures, and so lost was she in her thoughts, that Edna spoke twice to her before she heard her.

"Poor little girl! Did I shock your modesty to such an extent that you are speechless?" And then the widow laughed again; but as Gertrude did not speak, she began to feel angry, and crossly said, "For goodness sake, don't stand there looking as though I had killed some one. If I had known

you would make such a scene about it, I wouldn't have gotten you to assist me."

"Oh Edna! I am so sorry; but I was not thinking of you at all," and Gertrude went to her friend's side and put her arms around her. "I was thinking of how strange the doctor acted. Did you notice it?"

"Notice it? Of course I did," answered the widow. "It was more than I hoped for. I had expected him to be dazzled, but not to lose all control of himself like that. Did you ever see a man so flurried? Why he was afraid to look at me; and as for touching me, I believe he would have fainted."

Gertrude was about to reply that she did not think Dr. Anderson's agitation and loss of self-control was caused by Edna; but she decided not to do so, as she might have betrayed her own feelings if she talked to much about him; and besides, Mrs. Flemming would not have believed anything contrary, to what she wished to believe. So instead of enlightening her friend upon the subject she simply said, "I think it will be best to destroy this prescription, it might be dangerous to take any medicine prescribed by a man in his frame of mind."

"That is just what I think. He'll be back tomorrow, but I'll be so much better he won't need to give me another prescription. I hate to take medicine, and was a little afraid, if I acted as I did he would insist on making me take some while he was here. But everything worked lovely; and tomorrow we will see, the second act in the Comedy of Hearts."

Let us leave the actress of the Comedy for a while and follow the actor. He was as near to being mad as the widow had appeared to be. In the first place, he was in love with Gertrude, though he did not realize it, for the fiery eyes of Zeldee drove her from his mind. They seemed to be burning into his brain. For once in his life he believed in a soul—and he would have killed that soul as Marcus Anthoin had killed the body, if it had been possible for him to do; for instead of loving Zeldee he hated her with a hatred that increased every moment.

He was returning to his office, or more truly speaking, he was following her eyes which led him in that direction, when upon entering a badly lighted street, her form as well as her eyes became visible to him. She was dressed as Anthoin had described her, and was walking along the street a short distance ahead of him. She often looked back with a provoking smile. She was indeed pretty, there was no denying that, and if she had been a mortal, she would have been frozen in a short time; but as it was, her body, bare to the waist, and her limbs, bare to several inches above the knees, did not seem to feel the cold at all.

Anderson determined to catch her, and beg her to cease to torment him; so he called aloud, "Zel-dee, Zeldee, wait a moment I wish to speak with you," but he was answered by a mocking laugh, while a policeman standing on a corner, who of course could not see Zeldee or hear her laugh, mentally observed, "That must be a lunatic. I'll follow and see what he is about." The laugh maddened Anderson, who determined to catch the

laughter.

He ran toward her, but with another laugh she began to run too. It was a race not often heard of, —a soul being chased by a human being, a doctor, and he in turn being chased by a policeman. It did not last long, however, for just as Anderson put out his hand to take hold of her, Zeldee suddenly turned and crossed the street dodging under the heads of two horses, attached to a heavy carriage, being driven recklessly down the street. Anderson was brought to a sudden halt, and the wheels of the carriage grazed him as it passed. A hand was upon his shoulder holding him with a grip like iron.

“What are you about?” asked the policeman.

“Mr. Ferrell you have saved my life,” said the doctor, realizing the danger he had been in, “I must be going crazy.”

“Why Dr. Anderson!” ejaculated the policeman, loosening his hold on his shoulder. “Is it you?”

“Yes,” said Anderson, with a faint smile. “This is I. But let me thank you for what you have done, I—”

“I only did my duty,” quickly interrupted Ferrell. “But I have gotten off of my beat and must get back, so good night,” and he turned and walked swiftly away.

Zeldee's form had vanished, but her eyes remained to torment Anderson. There was a glitter in them too, that had not been noticeable before; and it made the doctor think it boded no good to him.

He was not far from his office, and reached it

soon without further adventure. He was surprised though, to find it brilliantly lighted; for when he left, he had turned the light low and locked the door; but now he found the door unlocked, and upon entering, he found a man seated, before the fire, in an easy chair. It was evident too, that the fire had been replenished.

The man did not rise when Anderson entered, but contented himself with nodding his head and saying with a bland smile, "You see doctor, I have made free use of our slight acquaintance, by taking possession of your office in your absence, and making myself comfortable to await your coming."

The doctor did not return the friendly nod and smile. He had no liking for criminals—especially wife murderers; so with something like a frown upon his handsome face, he said, "Mr. Anthoin, your 'free use,' as you say, of our slight acquaintance would be alright in a man worthy of respect; but a murderer cannot expect me to harbor him from justice. Yet, because you did me a favor once, though with a selfish motive, I will not hand you over to the law if you will leave immediately; but if you remain, I must call an officer."

Anthoin listened to him with the smile still upon his face. No one seeing him, would have thought he was being called a murderer, and being asked to leave the office. He remained seated when Anderson ceased speaking, but threw his head back and laughed loud and long. It was that same demonish laugh, that Anderson had heard a few months before in Birmingham, and it seemed now to chill the blood in his veins.

Enduring it as long as he could, he opened the

office door, stepped aside and looking at Anthoin at the same time pointing to the door, he said, "Go, go I say!"

Anthoin seemed to control his mirth with difficulty, and managed to say, "I prefer you would call an officer."

There was something so strange in his voice, that Anderson closed the door; and seating himself some distance from the intruder, he asked, "Well what do you want? Is it money?"

"Now you are becoming yourself again," replied Anthoin, his laugh giving place to a sober countenance. "I have sufficient money to last me for a while. What I want, is simply a conversation with you. There are few people that I have taken a fancy to, at first sight, and you are one of the few. Of all the millions of men and women in this world, you are the only one I call my friend, and you are the only one I am a friend to. I am believed to be a murderer, and you are the only one I care to dissuade from that belief."

"Then you did not kill your wife?" asked the doctor, his face losing some of its sternness, and moving his chair nearer the fire.

"Yes, I killed her," he was answered. "But I did not murder her. It all came out of my telling my story to you and Mr. Holland."

"I think I understand it now. She listened when you related your story, and afterwards upbraided you and you killed her. But that was murder. Wasn't it?"

"Yes, that would have been murder if I had killed her for that; but it did not happen that way. She listened to my story as you have said. She remain-

ed at the door of the room all through the night, as she told me afterward, vowing vengeance on the men who dared to handle her name so lightly. She determined to kill me, then Holland, and then herself. You, she had taken a fancy to, so she was not going to wreak her vengeance upon you until after her death, when she intended to take control of you as she once did of me, first to madden you; then to destroy your body; and finally to rule your soul in hell. These intentions are worthy of the fiend she is. She attempted to carry out her designs with me, but I out-witted her, and sent her back to the infernal region.

“For a week or two she said nothing about having heard my narrative; then one night, as we sat before the fire in our room, she accused me of infidelity, and told me of listening to us on that stormy night, and what resolves she had formed. Suddenly rising from her seat, with shrieks and oaths she dashed at me, brandishing a long bladed knife. I would have hypnotized her and spared her life, but I had not time, for her will was nearly as strong as mine. I only had time to spring to my feet, grasp the chair in which I had been sitting and with it fell her to the floor. I looked to see her get up somewhat subdued, but she never moved. You know the rest. She was dead. I had brained her.

“I was arrested, tried and convicted for her murder. I did not defend myself, but on the night before the execution day, I hypnotized the man who brought my supper and made him leave my cell door unbarred. Then I left barring the door behind me. I hypnotized all the guards I met, and

so passed them without their knowing it. I think I must have hypnotized over a dozen people before I felt myself to be free. I waited too until I had changed my appearance before I released them from the power of my will. You see doctor, I am not a murderer."

"My friend, forgive me for calling you a murderer! You know that appearances were against you." And Anderson held out his hand to Anthoin.

The latter took it and shook it warmly, saying as he did so, "You called me friend. I am glad of it. And as to forgiving you there is nothing to forgive. Had there been I would not have laughed as I did. I know you thought it strange, and that is what I intended. I'll tell you why I acted so. If I had not laughed and acted mysteriously you might have called an officer and that would not have suited me at all."

"Then it was only a bluff?"

"Exactly."

Thus they conversed; though all the time Anderson could see the eyes of Zeldee glaring fiercely at him. He told Anthoin about them and that they nearly drove him mad at times, adding, that although she had failed to avenge herself on the others, she was not failing in her vengeance on him. Anthoin replied that he had known it for some time, having learned it in that mysterious way in which he and Antonette had known the doctor and preacher were coming to their house in Birmingham on that stormy night.

As they talked the time flew by until the bells rang out the hour of mid-night. Then their conversation ceased, and Anthoin—strong minded man as

he was—felt a chill creep over him and he shuddered; while Anderson seemed to sink into a stupor, though conscious of everything around him. The door remained closed and the windows barred, yet, there in their midst stood Zeldee.

A scornful smile curled her lips as she looked at Anthoin. "So you have escaped my vengeance," she said. "Well so be it, but you shall have my curses. There is one, though, (pointing at Anderson) that cannot escape me." Then to him she said, "You hear that do you? You escaped me to-night, but you cannot do so for long. You love Gertrude Robson now, but you will forget her and love me. Ha! Ha! Ha! Love her a week, love me forever."

Turning from him, she bent her flashing eyes upon her former husband, and shaking her jeweled spear at him, while fire seemed to jump from its point, she shrieked, "I curse you! I curse you! I curse you!"

Then she vanished. But with a baffled look upon her face; for Anthoin had answered her curses with a laugh.

The doctor's stupor left him as she vanished, and for a long time the friends sat and talked about her strange visit to them. An hour later Anthoin left, and as he shook Anderson's hand he said, "We may never meet again on earth in our present forms, but our souls will meet some day. So until we meet again, farewell."

Anderson remained at his office all that night. He knew he could not sleep if he went to his room, there were too many thoughts in his mind—thoughts that had never entered there before. He had al-

ways supposed life to be simply existence; nothing more than the activity to the body, that when the body ceased to move and the heart ceased to beat, then life was destroyed. He had listened to Anthoin's story, on the night he saw him for the first time, because it interested him, liking, as he did, anything fanciful or wierd, though he believed in nothing supernatural. The narrative, however, made a deep impression on him; and for a short while he wondered if it really could be true, that man had a soul. It sounded more reasonable the way Anthoin explained it, than the way most preachers preached of it, but he soon dismissed the subject from his mind as mere bosh. But as he sat in his office chair through the remainder of the night, after Anthoin had gone and all was quiet, he thought and believed in an immortal soul.

It never occured to him that his visitor might have been a magician, and the apparition, nothing but one of his magical tricks, and her voice, but that of a ventriloquist. Zeldee to him was real. Had he not been seeing her eyes for weeks? Had he not seen her form earlier in the night? And had she not lured him nearly to his destruction? There was no doubt of it, Zeldee was a living soul, and he thought, "If there is one soul, then there must be others." He believed every word of Anthoin's wonderful story. Why should he not? He was having the same experience that Anthoin formerly had.

These thoughts of Zeldee did not fill his mind entirely. He thought of Gertrude; and realized, that he was in love for the first time in his life. "Gertrude Robson," Zeldee had called her, and he

firmly believed it to be her name. He also was indebted to Zeldee for awakening in his mind the fact that he loved. But still he detested that vile soul. The more he loved the Angelic Gertrude the more he hated the Demoness Zeldee.

And so the night passed slowly away. One moment the doctor would smile as he thought of the little lady, who had taken possession of his heart, and then an angry look would come into the eyes that were ever before him, and the smile would change into a frown; and he would shudder as he would think he could never enjoy the love of Gertrude while those eyes haunted him.

While he thought of her, Gertrude thought of him. She and Edna occupied the same bed; and long after the pretty widow, with her breast full of hope for the morrow, had laughed herself to sleep, she remained awake thinking of the man she loved, and puzzling her brain to imagine what really caused his strange conduct. She felt there was some great danger threatening him, and gladly she would have risked her life, and even her honor, if need be, to protect him. But what could she do? Long she lay there gazing at the ceiling above her; until the fire was extinguished and the room became chilled. She had said a prayer, not prayed, before she retired. Who could have prayed with Edna laughing all the time. She did not feel satisfied, so toward morning she slipped from the bed and knelt by its side, in the cold, and prayed:

“Oh Father! protect William, shield him from danger.”

When she arose from her knees she felt relieved. She had placed him in the care of her God, who

had never failed her. She quietly lay down again by the side of Edna; and fell asleep in a short time.

What a contrast there was between those two women? One of them hoped, on the morrow to secure a man's heart for a toy, perhaps, to cast it aside when tired of it, regardless of the pain she caused. "Toys were made to break," she thought, "Then why not break that toy?" The other hoped and prayed that, that heart would never know pain; and was willing to shield it at any cost.

That heart belonged to Anderson; and each of the women thought she loved him.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PLAY GOES ON.

Dr. Anderson called at Mrs. Flemming's, the following day, and found her greatly improved; though he had but a slight recollection of her condition on the previous evening. She was sitting in her cozy sitting room when he was shown in by Caroline, and received him with her most winning smile. She arose as he entered, bowed gracefully and said, "Oh doctor! I am indebted to you so much for saving my reason. They tell me, that when you came last night, I was a raving maniac. Words cannot tell how thankful to you I am."

And in those mocking eyes before his mental vision, there came a merry glitter; for Zeldee could

read the scheming widow's thoughts, if he could not.

He remained nearly an hour to Edna's intense gratification, presuming, as she did, that she had infatuated him; and that he could scarcely tear himself away. The truth of the matter was, he stayed as long as propriety would allow hoping to see Gertrude. But he was doomed to be disappointed; for Gertrude did not show herself; though she watched him from an upper window, as he walked away, and she sighed and placed her hand over her heart as though to ease the pain there.

The next day he came again and remained longer than on the day before. But still Gertrude was invisible, and he left mentally swearing at the torturing eyes before him, that seemed to laugh and deride him. Again Gertrude watched him from the upper window, as he left. But this time instead of only sighing, she burst into tears; for she thought, "He loves Edna and can never love me." If she had known the truth, those tears would have been tears of joy.

The following day the doctor called earlier than usual; for he was determined to see Gertrude if possible, and to his great delight he met her in the reception hall. She blushed, though he knew not why, bowed politely; and would have hurried away; but he stopped her and said, "Gertrude—Miss Robson I mean. Why do you keep yourself hid so?" Caroline, who had admitted him, discreetly left them alone.

"Can't you imagine why I come here?" The doctor's voice became tender; and he took possession of her hands, which she attempted to with-

draw, but he held them fast. "Mrs. Flemming is well, and does not need my services, and yet I continue to come. Why? Can't you guess?" He paused a moment, as though waiting for her to answer; but she only hung her head, and feebly tried to take her hands from him. "I came hoping to get a glimpse of you. Ever since our little walk and pleasant conversation, pleasant to me at least, I have longed to see you again."

Her hands were motionless, the flush deepened on her cheek, and she looked up as she asked, "To see me?"

"Yes Gertrude, to see you. May I call you Gertrude?" He looked down at her as he spoke, with love beaming in his face; and he almost lost sight of Zeldees flashing eyes as he did so.

"You may if you wish," she answered. "It will seem natural to you, I suppose, as the friend of whom you were thinking when I entered your office a few nights ago, is named Gertrude."

Anderson smiled as he remembered the excuse he had made for calling her name, and determined to make a clear breast of it, "That friend was you," he said. "Don't you remember ever seeing me before that night?"

The flush faded from Gertrude's cheek, and left her pale and trembling. But she said nothing; and Anderson continued. "It was not the first time I had seen you, or had spoken to you. About a year ago you entered my office; we conversed for a while and when you left you—"

"Oh don't!" she cried, interrupting him. "Don't say it. Please don't." And again she tried to remove her hands from his. But he held

them firmly.

"Let me keep them," he pleaded. "Do not take them away. I want to tell you why you entered my office, and how much I have thought of you since then."

But at that interesting moment, when Anderson was going to breathe love, with sincerity, into a fair woman's ears for the first time; and when Gertrude's cup of happiness was to overflow, Mrs. Flemming, who had been reading in her sitting room, and had heard a murmur of voices in the hall, opened the sitting room door and stood before them. They were confused, and she—well, if a thunderbolt had struck the house, she would scarcely have been more shocked. There was the doctor, "Her doctor," as she had called him once, holding the hands of her friend and guest; bowing over her in a familiar way; and looking at her as though she was the dearest person in all the world to him. It was an outrage that the woman she had called her friend should play her false, in her own house too. Why did she, who was such a model of womanly virtue, sneak about and meet her (Mrs. Flemming's) lover on the sly like this? If she wanted him for a lover, why didn't she come into the sitting room, where he could talk to both of them, and not waylay him in the passage? It was unlady-like. Thus reasoned Mrs. Flemming, who we will have to excuse; for her vanity had passed through a severe trial.

"Dr. Anderson," she began, in a cold, sarcastic voice. "I think I have recovered sufficiently to dispense with your services. Send me your bill,

and I will send you a check for the amount. Gertrude," she added, turning to her, "A lady should be careful in her conduct with a gentleman. This is no place for love making. You had better come into the sitting room."

It was evident to the doctor and Gertrude, that he had been snubbed. Gertrude Robson was no weak bit of milk and water gruel. She would have angrily answered Edna's insulting words; but she had long since learned to govern her temper, and knew it would be more lady-like to remain silent.

She simply extended her hand to the doctor. (He had dropped both of them, when Mrs. Flemming appeared.) He grasped it in his strong one and shook it, giving a gentle pressure ere he released it.

"Good bye," he said. "We will meet again."

"I hope so," she truthfully replied. "Good bye."

And then he bowed politely, though it seemed half mockingly, to the widow and left. It was then, that the full force of Edna's anger broke forth. She accused Gertrude of many ridiculous things; and raged on until completely out of breath.

The little lady remained silent until the end of the tirade; then she quietly said, "If it was necessary for me to defend myself, I would call your attention to the fact that it was I who brought this man to you when I could easily have kept him away. I left him alone to you yesterday and the day before; and would have done so today, but could not keep out of his way. I had no idea before, that he wanted to see me. Although I have

been loving him for a year, (you see, you have not the first claim on him as you say) I had no thought of his loving me. But you don't believe what I say, and it is immaterial to me. After what you have just said, I don't think we can be friends any more. I will get my things and leave. No, don't say anything else," "as Edna seemed about to speak. "Let us part in peace if not as friends."

Ten minutes later she departed. They, who had been friends for nearly a score of years, were separated at last, and by a barrier that would never be removed.

An hour later Dr. Anderson received the following note, brought by a special messenger:

"My Dear Dr. Anderson:—

You really cannot know how sorry I am for my rudeness. What made me act so, I must not tell you; perhaps you can imagine. If you will come this evening at five o'clock and take tea with me, I am sure I can make you forgive me. Please come.

Yours Truly,

Edna Hale Flemming.

A smile curled the lips of the doctor, as he tipped the messenger, and said, "There is no answer."

Then turning to the fire he placed the missive upon it. If he had never seen Gertrude Robson he would have accepted the invitation to tea and have had all the fun with the widow he could—but with the fair haired, blue eyed, dainty little woman in his heart; and Zeldee's eyes before him, it was different. So the charming Edna had to drink her tea alone; if she cared for it at all.

CHAPTER VII.

IN ZELDEE'S POWER.

Man's destiny has always been a mystery, and will always remain so. Man's future must stay in obscurity. There are records of men's lives being laid out before them, and the future fulfilling the prophecy; but it is more often the case, that the prophet is a false one. So it is that very few men would care to have their future unfolded to them, or would believe it, if it was revealed.

Julius Cæsar smiled at the warning of the soothsayer to "Beware the ides of March," and yet the sharp blade of Brutus together with those of the other assassins let out his heart's blood at the foot of Pompey's statue. The vision of the guillotine which was shown to Marie Antoinette by a magician, as the novelist says, when she made her triumphant bridal entry into France, was no doubt, soon forgotten; and yet the keen edge of that bloody instrument lowered her proud head to a level with the populace; and her husband's had dropped into the basket months before. It is said that Lord Byron was foretold events in his life by a Gypsy; and other great men have had their futures pictured with accuracy. But they are all exceptions. Foreknowledge of this description is generally incorrect.

But be it so or not, if some one had told Dr. Anderson, that it would be months, and that he would nearly pass into the jaws of death, before he

again saw Gertrude Robson, he would not have believed it.

After destroying the note received from Mrs. Flemming, he stood for a few moments as though lost in thought, then he left his office with some definite purpose in view, it seemed. But a change came over him when he reached the street. He wished to go in one direction, but an irresistible force seemed to draw him another. Strive as he would, he went not whither he wanted; but followed the ruling power—that power was Zeldee's eyes. He had lost control of his mind; he could not govern his thoughts. What he did was not his desire, but the wish of Zeldee. He passed old acquaintances on the street, but if he saw them he did not recognize them. He entered a bank; and although the cashier was an intimate friend of his, he made no reply to his cheery, "Good day." He filled out a check for three thousand dollars and presented it; and even though it over drew his account for several hundred dollars, it was cashed without comment, he being so well known.

From the bank he went to a railway passenger station, and procured a ticket to New York. There was no northbound train leaving for several hours, and yet he waited. His manner was so strange, that people commented freely upon it; but he seemed not to hear them. He was recognized by men and women; but they were as strangers to him.

A newspaper reporter accosted him and said, "Are you going to take a trip, Dr. Anderson?" But his only reply was a vacant stare.

When the leaving time of his train arrived he

entered one of the coaches, and seated himself with a mechanical movement. The other passengers watched him curiously, and said, "A strange man." And indeed he was. Going on an unknown journey without bag or baggage. Was ever like heard of before?

While Zeldee's power over Anderson increased, the woman who loved him dearer than her life, was praying for him. Gertrude Robson had great faith in prayer, and had stemmed the tide of many a girlish trouble by its aid.

While the night express, with Anderson aboard, was speeding northward, Gertrude seemed to have a presentment that all was not right with the man she loved. What it was she could not tell; but there was something wrong she felt sure. Again and again she prayed, still that comfort, that usually followed her prayers, did not come. She did not sleep that night. As the hours dragged slowly by, the presentment of evil befalling her beloved weighed more heavily upon her breast. The almost sleepless night she had passed at Mrs. Flemming's was nothing to compare with this; then she received comfort from prayer, now she did not; though she prayed as she had never prayed before, and her tears fell like rain.

But when morning came her eyes were dry, though tear stains were upon her pillow. Her lips were parched and on each cheek a bright red spot was glowing. She tossed deliriously upon her bed in the throes of fever. For weeks she lay there, between life and death. Her mother, and excellent nurse, remained almost constantly by her side, only leaving when it was absolutely necessary to get a

little sleep.

The old family physician would often look grave, shake his head and say, "If we could but find this William for whom she calls so often, there might be some hope for her. But as it is—" and then he would sigh and shake his head again.

There was one person who could have informed them of this William, that was Mrs. Edna Fleming, and doubtless she would have done so had not her vanity been trampled on again. Hearing of Gertrude's illness she pocketed her pride and trying to forget the supposed treachery of the fair girl, she promptly called to see her former friend and was shown into the sick room. But it had such a bad effect on the patient, throwing her into a nearly ungovernable fit of raving, that the doctor advised that the widow be excluded from the room thereafter. And so they lost that chance of learning who William was, though they did not know it.

Youth triumphed at last, however, and one bright spring day Gertrude accompanied by her mother was moved to a farm house in the northern part of Virginia where the bracing country air put new life into her frame.

Once she had asked "Mother, did a Dr. Anderson call to inquire after me while I was sick?"

And her mother answered "No."

A sad, weary expression came into her face and she sighed. Had he neglected her? She loved him and could not believe it. Some harm had befallen him she felt sure and she longed for her strength, and the time when she would return to her home so she could learn something of him.

PART THREE.

THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE.

CHAPTER I.

THE AMERICAN'S PALACE.

It was no palace. It was only a spacious modern dwelling, furnished after the modern fashion with the best that money could buy. It was planned by an American architect and hence was of American design.

Its surroundings, the magnificent shade trees; the well trimmed shrubbery; the nicely kept lawn, the summer house and the other buildings all combined to show, there was some one on the premises of refined tastes. It was called "The American's Palace" by the people of the village near by, not because it was palatial in appearance but because it was far superior to any house for miles around. This house, or palace, which ever you please, was situated in France near the river Rhone. If it is there today or not I cannot say, it may have been demolished by storm or fire, but if it is there it is in the hands of strangers; while the man who had it built and who surrounded himself by all of its luxury is sleeping in the village grave yard.

One bright spring morning two men were con-

versing in the village tavern. One of them was a tavern loungeur, the other a stranger in the village. The loungeur was like the rest of the villagers, only a little more indolent and fond of gossip, and as the tavern was the place to hear all of the latest news he made it his headquarters. It was a rare thing for a stranger to enter that village, so when one appeared he was eyed as though he was a wild beast of some kind in a cage, being paraded for the benefit of the villagers; and whoever was lucky enough to be spoken to by him, was the center of attraction for weeks, he having to repeat over and over the few words said by the stranger. So the loungeur felt greatly honored when the old gentleman, for the stranger in this instance looked at least seventy years old, began to question him concerning what few things of interest there were in that locality.

After the conversation had progressed for some time the stranger asked, "Do you know a man in this locality named Robert Bouman?"

"The American who lives in the Palace?" queried the loungeur.

"He's an American. But does he really live in a Palace?"

"Well not exactly, but it is called 'The American's Palace.' "

Although the stranger's first question concerning Bouman had not been answered directly, he concluded by the others talk that he knew something of the American. So he asked "What kind of a man is this fellow?"

"I can't say," cautiously replied the loungeur. "He may be alright, but some don't like him. I

haven't seen much of him myself."

The old gentleman eyed the fellow narrowly and detected at once his reserve, but determined to draw him out. He made a false statement at a hazard; and to his delight, the glib tongue of the man was loosened, and he learned all that he cared to know concerning Robert Bouman.

"I have heard," said he, "That this man is very wicked. In fact I know a thing or two that he would not care for many people to know, and I could take him from the false position he is occupying, if only I knew what opinion his neighbors have of him."

As we have said the statement was false but as the lounge did not know it he gave the stranger all the information he desired.

If that is what you want, there is no one who can tell you the opinion his neighbors have of him better than I. You have heard right, he is a very wicked man and his neighbors know it. He is feared and hated by almost every body for miles around. Being very wealthy he does anything he pleases. It is a common occurrence for a man's daughter to be kidnapped, or his wife be lured away from home by him; and if the irate father or husband goes to the palace to regain the lost one, he is set upon by the villian's servants, beat and kicked shamefully, and often chased from the place with dogs. Sometimes too, a man is found near the place, bruised and lifeless, and it is usually a near relative of a woman he has lately decoyed. But this is not all, often when a woman resists his entreaties his treatment of her is too horrible to mention."

"Is there no law to punish him? Why don't they arrest him?" Asked the stranger.

"That was tried long ago," replied the lounge. "But French justice is like American justice, on the side of the one who makes the largest bribe. You can imagine monsieur the opinion of his neighbors in regard to his character. Where he got his money no one knows; it is the opinion of some that it was a legacy from the Devil; but if this is correct or not, he uses it for the Devil's work."

"Well that opinoin is wrong," said the old man turning toward the door. "I know the source of his wealth, and the devil had nothing to do with it. I am much obliged to you Monsieur for your information, but I must be going now. Then he passed into the one street of the village.

Perhaps our readers have recognized him. The dye that was once upon his hair has been removed leaving his locks silvery white; he has grown no beard upon his wrinkled face, and his limbs are suple as when we saw him last. It was Marcus Anthoin and he was in quest of the "Philosopher's Stone."

He had once told Dr. William Anderson and the Rev. George Holland that he would get the stone. How, he did not know, but he would get it. And as he left the tavern and passed into the street he said to himself, "If he was a good man I might have some compunction in robbing him of his treasure. But as it is, well, 'Let the devil take care of his own.' "

Henri Gailor was a young man who had left his home and gone to Paris to seek fame and fortune. Although neither had been successfully

achieved, he had gained enough of each for the people in his native village, who listened eagerly to every account of him that reached them, to think he was illustrious. And many were the tales told of his boyhood by the old men and women, while the young ones stood around and listened, wishing that they too could become famous and have the aged grandsires and grandames tell pretty episodes of their younger days.

"A man hath no honor in his own country," is true to some extent, but it is not true of the French villagers. Let one of their number leave home and win fame to no matter how small a degree, his former associates will load him with honors.

When Marcus Anthoin left the tavern and passed into the street of the little village, he found the inhabitants of the place flocking into the street also. They were greatly excited and happy in the extreme. Henri Gailor had unexpectedly returned and the youths of the villiage had him upon their shoulders, proudly parading him about the streets. He protested vigorously, declaring that he must go home and greet his aged father and mother but they would not hear of it until they were through with him. Then one of their number called for a speech, the cry was taken up by others and even the older people standing near clapped their hands and joined in the cry. An empty box was soon procured, and he was placed upon it while cry after cry of "Speech, speech," rent the air.

"My friends," he began, and he smiled as he looked into the joyous faces crowded around him. "I am no speech maker, but out of regard for the kindness you have shown me I will try to talk for

a short while, and then I am sure you will let me go to see my parents."

Shouts of "Yes," "Yes," answered him; but they knew full well, there was another, besides his parents, he wished to see, and that was the fairest maiden of whom the village boasted, and his promised bride.

"Long years ago," he continued, "when the earth was not crowded with men, but those that lived were happy and lived for centuries, a father called his sons to his side and said: 'The time will come my sons when men will value an hour as you value a day.' That time has come dear friends. If we waisted an hour now it is more disastrous in its consequences than if those ancients waisted a day. At the foot of the Hill of Life you loiter and pluck the gay flowers of pleasure. You smile as you look at the climbers toiling above you and say: 'There is plenty of time for me to start later on.' You are deluding yourselves. How old are you? Twenty-five or six some of you say. Then can't you realize that a third if not half of your life is past.

'If up a hill you start at early morn,
You'll reach the top before the evening tide.
But if you wait until the hours have flown,
You'll pass the night upon the mountain side.'"

"Well said," muttered Anthoin as he turned away. "But let him entertain his friends, I have other business. I must get possession of the philosopher's stone, and then I will have reached the mountain peak of wealth if not fame.

So he left the crowd of happy people, and passed down the street in the direction of the Ameri-

can's Palace. On the out-skirts of the village he stopped, a woman was sitting in a cottage door, weeping bitterly, and by her side was a little girl weeping also. Anthoin noticed at once that the cottage and its surroundings were neat and clean, showing that its occupants were not indolent. "Perhaps these people are in need of food," he thought. "If so they deserve help, I'll speak to them."

The woman raised her head when he stopped, but the child kept hers buried in her apron and continued to sob aloud. Anthoin raised his hat, bowed politely and said, "Madam it appears that you are in trouble. If I can assist you in any way I shall be glad to do so."

The woman hesitated a moment then stifling her sobs she said: "I am afraid Monsieur you cannot help me."

"Perhaps I can do more than you suppose," replied the old man, still thinking she was in destitute circumstances and too proud to own it.

"Oh Monsieur I am a poor widow woman, and had only two children to love and now one of them is gone." And she covered her face with her hands again, adding her wailings to those of the child.

"Is she dead?" asked Anthoin.

"No, no, I would she were, rather than this. Monsieur she has been kidnapped by that wicked American who lives over there," and she pointed in the direction of the American's palace.

"I understand now. I have heard of this villain," said Anthoin, thinking at the same time, perhaps, the daughter might have gone of her own free will.

But the woman continued, "He has often tried to entice her by offers of gold, but she repulsed him every time and came and told me of his insulting offers. Poor girl she is only seventeen and has no one to protect her but myself. But what could I do? Her father is dead, she has no brother and her affiancé is away in Paris. With no one to help me I could not hope to do what strong men of the village had failed to do, resist this monster and protect his victim from him. Early this morning while I was at a neighbor's he came with his servants and stole my Marie. You see this scar?" and she pulled the child's hand away from her face, showing a bruise near the left temple. "The dear child held fast to her sister and the brute struck her here and felled her to the floor."

Anthoin's face got white with rage and it was with difficulty that he suppressed his fury. "That is enough," he said, "I am going to this dog's kennel and unless he releases your daughter immediately I'll tear his smoking heart from his vile body and throw it to the hounds!"

He turned away abruptly and stalked off once more in the direction of the American's palace.

The woman called her thanks after him but she had little hope of his success, so she reseated herself on the door step and began to weep again. If she had known the man her eyes would have been dry, and she would have been looking for her daughter, knowing she would surely return.

An hour later Henri Gailor came joyously toward the cottage, but stopped suddenly at the sight of tears. Marie was his promised bride, and he had come expecting her happy greeting, and

this was the sight he saw. The mother in a few words told him the fate of her daughter.

He stood as one dazed for a short while then roused himself and said, "Marie, My Marie gone? My sweetheart lost? But he shall give her up." Then dashing into the cottage he returned with a long bladed knife in his hand. "It is better than nothing," he cried as he passed the woman and sped away in the direction that Marcus Anthoin had taken.

CHAPTER II.

THE DAUGHTER OF MERIDETH KLINE.

When Marcus Anthoin related the story of his marvelous adventures to Anderson and Holland, he simply mentioned to them that when he was Merideth Kline he was a woman hater, saying it was the same old tale of blue eyes and sunny curls, and then she loved another. If he had said, that although he was never married, he had lived with that blue eyed and sunny haired woman for three years, it would have been more correct. They had one child who was named after her mother. Clara Kline was a pretty infant and bid fair to be like her mother when she reached maturity. The elder Clara took the child with her when she deserted him for another man.

One night while searching in her trunk for some lost article she found a long forgotten Bible

which had been given to her in her girlhood by her mother. A flood of memory brought back the scene of the old home, her gentle mother, her aged father, and her brother and sisters. Tears filled her eyes as she opened the book, and through the tears she began to read. It was the story of the adulterous woman brought to Christ. And when she reached the part where Jesus said, "Go and sin no more," it seemed as though the words had been spoken to her and she determined then and there, to leave her life of sin. Taking her child she went to a western city and secured employment as a seamstress, and in the town there was no one more pious than Mrs. Kline, as she called herself. Merideth Kline never knew what became of Clara and her child, and so did not mention them when he related his narrative to the two friends on that night of wind and snow, except the allusion to "blue eyes and sunny curls."

Thirty years after the woman's reform, her daughter was sitting in a handsomely furnished room in a house in France, near the river Rhone. She was the unhappy wife of the owner of the American's palace. We say unhappy, for although she was surrounded with every luxury, her lot was one not to be envied. She loved her husband once, she thought, but his conduct had long since smothered the amorous flame. No doubt she was the only being with whom he came in contact who was not treated brutally by him at some time or other. He was always gentle to her, therefore she could not complain of him on that score. It was his negligence that stifled her affections. As she sat at her piano and let her fingers wander aimlessly

over the keys, she thought of her happy childhood passed in the United States of America, and she sighed like a bird in a gilded cage, for the palace was her prison.

A cough aroused her from her reverie, turning quickly she came face to face with a man.

It was Marcus Anthoin. He was standing, hat in hand, near the center of the room. He had seen the lady through the window, and at once recognized her face as one he had seen long ago. Seeing no servants he entered the house and passed into the room without being announced.

As she turned when he coughed, he bowed low before her and said, ere she had time to speak:

"Good morning, are you or were you named Clara Kline?" He did not speak in French. He could not mistake the American appearance of the lady, and spoke accordingly.

His presence in the room had frightened her at first, but when he pronounced her maiden name in her native tongue, she felt more at ease, and though her voice trembled a little, she answered quietly: "That was my name before I married Mr. Bouman. Did you ever know me or my parents?"

"I knew you as an infant. I was your father's best friend."

"That being the case" she said, "I am indeed glad to see you Mr. —."

"Anthoin." And he smiled as he supplied the name. A smile of a pretty woman and of an old man is always pleasant; so when he smiled Clara Bouman felt drawn to him, and it seemed that she had known him always.

"Pray be seated," she continued, "A friend of

my father, who alas, was never known by me, shall be my friend also, if he will."

She extended her hand to him which he took and raised to his lips. A rush of fatherly love filled his heart but he controlled his emotion and said, "It will make an old man like me happy to be your friend."

He seated himself, and soon the two were conversing like old acquaintances. Anthoin learned from her that she was not happy; that her husband's vile deeds were known to her and pained her a great deal and that she would have left the place long ago, to return to her mother in the United States, but she knew that she was watched, and any attempt to escape would be frustrated; and in all probability it would make her husband treat her as cruelly as he did the others. The conversation continued nearly an hour. When Anthoin arose to leave he told Clara part of his business there. (He did not mention the philosopher's stone.) He told her that her husband had that day abducted a young girl from the village, and that he had come there to make him liberate her.

"Don't attempt it," she cried in a frightened voice, catching hold of his arm as though to detain him. "When he has done a deed of this kind he keeps his servants, six powerful men, on guard in a room back of this, which is connected to his room of infamy by a private stair. "If any one attempts any interference with their master he is brutally treated by them and sometimes, I am afraid, they leave him lifeless."

"They shall not leave me lifeless," said the old man, taking her hands gently from his arm and

holding them in his. Neither will they be brutal to me. I have a passport to your husband's presence, a letter of introduction from an old friend of his. Besides I could conquer twice six men. But tell me, is there no other way to reach his room except through the one guarded by his servants?"

She hesitated a moment and then answered. "None, not even by a ladder to his windows; for they are securely barred."

"Then I must ascend the stair," he said as he released her hands, "Good bye; it may be that I will see you again, but if I do not, don't forget the old man who, though he has seen so little of you, loves you as a father loves his child."

Stooping he lightly kissed her forehead and left the room.

When he had gone, Clara began to pace restlessly to and fro with a troubled look upon her face, wondering if she had done right or wrong in telling the old man a lie. She decided at last that she had done right in keeping her promise; for she had promised never to reveal her knowledge of the sliding pannel leading to her husband's room, through which she used to enter, but through which she had not passed for years. As she thought of it, her rights as a wife seemed to rise before her, and more than ordinary compassion for the poor girl in his power filled her breast. Suddenly she ceased her pacing, stood motionless for a moment, and then with head erect she left the room, fifteen minutes after Anthoin had done so.

She had promised not to reveal the secret door, but had not promised not to use it; and she determined once more to assert her rights and strive to

save the unfortunate girl imprisoned in the room from her villianous husband, and perhaps she could protect the brave old man if he put himself in danger. But like the mother of Marie she did not know the power of Marcus Anthoin.

CHAPTER III.

FUN AND FOLLY.

When Marcus Anthoin walked into the midst of the six stalwart servants of Robert Bouman, they sprang toward him like wild beasts springing upon their prey. But he laughed tantalizingly as he waved them back, and to their query of who he was and what he wanted, replied, "It makes no difference, I want to see your master."

"Well you can't see him," said the fiercest looking of the men, who appeared to be the leader.

"Can't see him eh? We'll see about that," and Anthoin laughed again; but this time in that strange, demonical way that had so frightened Anderson and Holland some time before. It had its effect now upon these craven bullies, and their fright increased when he took a seat by the table, on which were glasses and a bottle of whiskey, and filled a glass with the fiery liquor, offered it to the spokesman and said, "Drink this Bill Bush, and maybe you will be more polite."

The men were all Americans of the lowest class, reared in the slums of the largest cities; and

for reasons best known to themselves, preferred to remain out of the bounds of the United States; and even in France passed under assumed names.

Bill Bush's dark countenance became darker still when his name was called—the name he left behind when he crossed the Atlantic. "Who are you?" the ruffins demanded simultaneously of Anthoin, again glaring at him in an unpleasant manner.

But Anthoin continued his blood curdling laugh and answered, "The Devil's son-in-law, who knows more of you than you know of him. You don't believe it," he continued as they looked incredulous. "Then I'll convince you."

With that the fun began. He hypnotized one after the other of them, releasing each in time to see the antics of the other. Beginning with Bill Bush, he made him dance a jig, and afterward eat a newspaper, thinking it was cake; another, he made stand on his head in a corner of the room; another became suddenly drunk and wanted to kiss Bill Bush, who he supposed was a pretty girl; the fourth imagined that he was walking on tacks with his bare feet, and his antics brought smiles to the faces of his fellow servants, although they were nearly paralyzed from fright; the fifth and sixth fought with imaginary foes and were nearly exhausted when Anthoin released them from his influence. "Now," said he as they stared at him in wonder, "Shall I start all of you to shaking as though you had ague, and leave you so, until I go and see your master and return?"

The very thought of it made them shake, and

very humbly they begged him not to do so. "Very well," he said, "Then do not interfere with me when I go to your master's room, but always do as I tell you, and all will be well."

With that he arose from the chair in which he had been seated and went toward the stair which ascended from that room. Not a man attempted to stop him, but instinctively drew farther away as he passed. He had played a bold game and won; and fate must determine the play of the next card. Upon the stair he turned once to look at them, and hissed in his demon like voice the one word, "Remember."

While the funny scene was being enacted in the room below, there was a scene of folly above.

Robert Bouman had made several futile attempts to break the will of Marie. So he determined to punish her in his diabolical way before forcing her into submission. Hid in the room was a young negress, one of the most depraved of her race, and a fit subject of the more depraved white man, who the rope of Judge Lynch would soon have put out of existence had he remained in America. At a low call from her master the girl rushed from her hiding place and struck the astonished Marie full in the face. It was not a hard blow, but it was enough to fire the blood in the white girl's veins, so she defended herself vigorously when the negress attacked her again, which she speedily did.

The villain's eyes glistened as the fight progressed. The negress was strong, but Marie was strong also. Sometimes they would clinch; and Bouman would applaud as they broke away, the

negress tearing the white girl's clothing, and Marie with hands full of matted, wooly hair. The black face was bleeding from many scratches, but the white face was not scarred.

It was evidently not the black girl's intention to bruise her antagonist as she had not struck her after the first assault, but contented herself with rending her clothing until they were in tatters. Piece after piece she tore away until here and there the fair skin gleamed through the rags. Then the fight became more interesting for the spectator. His eyes shone more brilliantly and a flush of excitement spread over his face. Once the fighters clinched and fell to the floor together, each trying to get the mastery over the other; Marie hitting, scratching and biting; the other tearing and tearing. During the scuffle, the negress succeeded in removing her opponent's shoes and tearing away her hose, to the great delight of Bouman. When the women regained their feet they stood facing each other for a few minutes, panting for breath, and then the fight began again. Poor Marie! In defending herself as she thought, she only did as her cowardly abductor wished. Nothing could give him more pleasure than to see part after part of her fair body revealed; and when she stood as ere long she did, with her body bare above the waist, and the probability of the few remaining shreds of clothing, being soon torn from her, he could scarcely restrain himself from clasping her in his arms before the negress had completed her work. He enjoyed his folly, but little did he think what would be the price he would pay for it.

CHAPTER IV.

RETRIBUTION.

As Henri Gailor neared the American's Palace he came up with an old man who was going in the same direction. He was so lost in his thoughts of Marie and her peril, that he would have passed without speaking, had not the old man called his name. Looking up he recognized a friend of his boyhood, whose wonderful stories told to him, when he sat by his side on a rude bench near the old man's cottage door, stilled into his mind his first longings for fame. It had been two years since they had met and each had changed in many ways, but they could not fail to recognize each other—the love of the boy for the man and the man's love for the boy were still in their hearts and kept their memory clear; through all of the changes of each, the other could see his friend of former years. It was a happy meeting mixed with pain, for each had his trouble on that day. The young man told of the kidnapping of his betrothed and the old man listened with clenched teeth—he hated the American with all the hatred of age—nearly a year ago his grand daughter, the last of his line, was abducted by the villain, and never recovered from the treatment received at his hands.

He told Henri of it and added, "Yesterday she was buried by the side of her dead infant in the village grave yard. "What do you intend to do?"

he asked, wiping a tear from his eye.

"To the American?"

"Yes."

Gailor half uncovered the handle of a knife and a gesture told the rest.

"That's not so easily done my young friend," said the old man. "When he stole my Jeannette I went there (pointing to the palace) to shed his heart's blood. I knew the house like a book, I watched them build it, I knew of a room that could only be reached by a private stair and a sliding pannel, and I supposed that this would be the place in which he'd keep his victim. Not knowing how to find the pannel I decided to use the stair. But when I entered the room from which it leads I was attacked by several men, and when I recovered consciousness I was lying in yonder wood. When I managed to crawl to my home my grand daughter was there, and the devil's work had been done."

"Tell me how to find this stair," cried Henri. "And I promise you, I'll break passed his hirelings and avenge Jeannette as well as Marie."

The old man loved the ardent youth and would have warned him to stay away from the palace; but the word revenge was too sweet to his ears and his hatred of Robert Bouman wrangled in his bosom; so he informed his young friend how to find the stairs and the location of the room to which it lead, and bid him, "Strike once for me."

"I shall strike, never fear that!" whispered back the young man as he glided away through the grove to which they had come as they talked.

The old man muttered something to himself as

he turned away; and who shall say if it was a blessing on Henri Gailor or a curse for Robert Bouman.

* * *

Marcus Anthoin paused before entering the infamous den of Robert Bouman; a noise in the room below attracted his attention. From the position he occupied he could not see in the room he had just left; but stepping noiselessly into a niche he listened, with strained ears, to what seemed to be the signs of a struggle.

And indeed it was a struggle, though an unequal one—six men against a youth. Henri Gailor had burst into the midst of the still frightened ruffins, like an avalanche, he rushed passed them with the speed of the antelope and had placed a foot upon the first step of the stair when the dastards attacked him. Superhuman power seemed to have been given him, for he resisted their attack like a young lion.

Grasping a chair he succeeded for a time in keeping his assailants at bay. Rush after rush they made, only to be beaten by the bold youth; then the chair was wrenched from his grasp and Bill Bush caught him by the throat, but with a cry the tough fell back in the arms of his companions, while the young man sprang up the stairs with a bloody knife in his hand. The fate of their comrade checked the rest of the attacking party for a moment, and when they rallied sufficiently to pursue, Henri was on the landing above.

It was just at this time that Mrs. Bouman, who had formed the resolve to beard her husband in his

den and save the unfortunate girl if she could, arrived at the sliding pannel and felt for the hidden spring.

In the room Robert Bouman was in an ecstacy of delight. Marie was standing before him perfectly nude. At a word from him the negress was retreating to her hiding place, while Marie was blushing crimson as she realized for the first time her condition.

"Oh my pretty one," said the heartless wretch, preparing to take her in his arms. "What would your lover of whom you spoke, say if he should see you now?"

"He'd say, 'take that you scoundrel,'" cried Henri Gailor bursting through the door and burrying the already bloody knife in Bouman's throat.

Then the pursuers arrived at the head of the stairs and would have rushed upon the avenging youth, had not an old man stepped in front of them, pointing at the same time to the stairs and saying as he did so, "Go."

It was Marcus Anthoin, and filled with terror the servants fled. They had looked into the room and had seen their dying master, but had not seen the beautiful necked girl. Henri Gailor, himself, had caught but a glimpse of her as she was drawn through an opening in the wall made by a sliding pannel being moved by a queenly woman. Clara Bouman had saved the girl from the profaning eyes of the others, if not from those of her husband.

"Young man," said Anthoin entering the room, "You have done a deed you may well be proud of. It is to be hoped that you have rid the world of one

of the blots of humanity. A man whose aim in life was no higher than that of the dogs of the desert."

"Rid the world of me?" Gurgled, rather than spoke the wounded man, while blood gushed from his mouth with every word. "No murderers you have not done it, nor will you; but I'll rid the world of you." He tried to rise as he spoke; but the effort was too much for him and he fell back exhausted.

Anthoin laughed his low demonish laugh as he said, "You will, will you? But not yet."

The laugh sounded so horrible in the room with the dead or dying man that even Henri, who had given the fatal stab, if fatal it should prove, shuddered and turned toward the door. But he summoned courage to turn back and say, "I must thank you Monsieur for your timely interference. But do you think you are shielding a murderer?"

Marcus Anthoin had recognized the young man as the one he had seen earlier in the day, and remembered hearing one of the villagers say he was quite a Parisian. Connecting this with what the mother of Marie had told him, and having seen Clara when she drew the blushing girl through the secret doorway, he gave the following answer to the young man's query:

"No Monsieur not a murderer, but a retributor. Who should avenge a fatherless girl's wrongs if not her lover? And in avenging hers, you have paid the debt for many others. Go Monsieur and reclaim your sweetheart from Mme. Bouman, who is a lady inspite of her husband. I trust you will

find Mademoiselle as unsullied as when you last saw her."

The young man left the room but was recalled by Anthoin, who cautioned him to be on his guard, or the rascally servants of Robert Bouman might waylay him.

"I have thought of that," replied Henri. "And will be careful that they do not surprise me. I think the fate of one of the number will make them shy about attacking me again."

We may as well mention here, that the youth was not molested by the servants and that he was kindly received by Mrs. Bouman, who turned over to his care his sweetheart Marie, who she had dressed in some of her own apparel.

Robert Bouman died from the effect of his wound, and Henri Gailor was arrested for his murder. But the latter had made some influential friends at Lyons and in Paris, who came to his assistance; and as the American toughs were afraid to get too near the officers of the law and could not be found when wanted, he was acquitted after the evidence of Clara and Marie had been heard.

A short while later, he and Marie were married. On their wedding morn the bride received a lovely silver cup from Mrs. Bouman, who had sold the American's Palace, and left that day for America.

CHAPTER V.

LOST, THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE.

Although Marcus Anthoin had caught a glimpse of the retreating negress, when the door was so suddenly opened, he said nothing of her to Gailor; but as soon as the young man had gone, he unceremoniously dragged her from her hiding place, and bid her go for a surgeon. The black wench was nearly frightened out of her wits, and was only too glad to leave the room. She descended the stairs in a reckless manner, at the risk of breaking her neck, much to the amusement of Anthoin, who, when left alone with the wounded man, determined to carry out the main object of his presence there.

"The work must be done now or never," he said to himself; and turning to Bouman, he brought his hypnotic power to bear upon him. It was easy to control the man's will, as he was so weak from the loss of blood.

"Can you hear what I say?" asked Anthoin.

Bouman murmured, "Yes."

"Have you the philosopher's stone in your possession?" was the next question.

Again Bouman answered, "Yes."

"Where is it?" asked the interrogator.

"In the right hand pocket of my pants," was the reply.

A smile of satisfaction gleamed on the face of Anthoin as he commanded, "Give it to me."

The wounded man could scarcely move, yet he obeyed the other's will. Slowly his hand sought his pocket and brought forth a hard, smooth stone, the size of a filbert, which Anthoin grasped eagerly as foot-steps were heard upon the stair.

"Forget what you have done," he hurriedly commanded, releasing him from that influence, which he possessed to so rare a degree, as the surgeon, who had been hastily summoned by the men servants to attend their wounded comrade, appeared at the head of the steps, followed by the shaking negress and two of the men, who were less timid than the rest.

Robert Bouman lay where he had fallen, and around him was a pool of blood. The surgeon looked at him and shook his head.

"Place him on the bed," he said. And the two men servants obeyed. With their aid he disrobed him, and then examined his wound.

"He has lost too much blood, he can't live," he said, and stood back looking at the dying man.

The words seemed to reach, and revive Bouman. He opened his eyes and regardless of the blood that frothed from his mouth, he shrieked in his weak voice, "I shall live, I wont die. No, I wont die. I'm not ready to die. Life is too sweet to talk of dying; there is too much fun to be had. Where is Marie? Did you men see her? Wasn't she pretty? Oh!" and here the blood drowned his words. He paused a moment to rest, and then began again. "Clara! Where is Clara? She use to come to my room, but she doesn't come any more. She doesn't love me now; I know I killed her love, for she did love me once. I have sinned against her; and now

you say I am dying. That is horrible; dying, dying, dying, dying." And he repeated the word until his voice died away in a whisper.

Suddenly he half raised himself in bed, and cried, though his words were scarcely audible, "Bring me those pants you have just removed from me." But no one moved to obey. "Don't you hear?" he cried a little louder, and he looked from one to another. "Bring me those pants."

Up to this time Marcus Anthoin had remained standing where he was when the surgeon and the servants entered, but now he came forward and handed Bouman the article of apparel, for which he asked.

The wounded man eagerly grasped the pants with his weak hands, and hissed through his set teeth, "You are the fellow that laughed at my suffering, curse you! You are glad I am dying; but if I die, I'll cheat the devil out of my soul. I have something here that will frighten him away."

Then he began to search in the pockets. One after the other he examined, and then over again and again. A frightened look came on his face as he turned the pockets inside-out, then not finding what he wanted, he cried, and this time succeeded in raising his voice to almost a screech, "Lost, the philosopher's stone, lost," and he fell back dead.

The servants fled. The last words of their dying master had filled them with alarm.

Marcus Anthoin followed, in a quiet, dignified way; but with a smile curling the corners of his mouth, as part of an old verse flashed through his mind:

"Let him who treads on serpents heads,
Beware the deadly fangs."

CHAPTER VI.

SAVED FROM THE PIT.

The landlord of an inn, in a small village in Austria, pointed to a man, who was walking away from the hotel, in the direction of the mountains, and said, "Do you see that young man? He is going for a solitary ramble in the hills, but I have no idea he will ever return."

His quests looked up inquiringly, and one of them asked, "Why?"

"Well you see," answered the proprietor, trying to look wise, "Not many Americans have stopped at my hotel; but of the few, two have acted very strangely. One of them, nearly thirty years ago, when I was a young man just starting into business, came here and stayed for a week. He was a peculiar man, with a strange expression in his eyes, as though they were fixed on some particular object all the time; and his movements were mechanical, like a man walking while asleep. One morning, 'twas just such a day as this, he and several others, all my guests, started with two guides to visit the Devil's Pit. He never came back, the rest returned without him, he had done what others had often been tempted to do, that is, had thrown himself into the pit. And now this young man, who arrived yesterday, acts like that other of thirty years ago; and has wandered away into the mountains. If he goes far, and gets near the Devil's Pit, I feel sure, the devil will claim

another soul."

His listeners laughed at what they considered the old landlord's superstition, and some one queried, "Did you lose anything by the man not returning?"

"No," was the reply. "His baggage was worth much more than the amount of his bill."

"And if this man does not come back, will you lose anything?" asked another.

"No," again replied the landlord. "He paid me for a week in advance, as he had no security."

"Then you will be the gainer if he doesn't return," laughed a third.

"Oh, but the poor man! The poor man!" said the innkeeper as he turned away. "I would rather he would live and I make less." But, in his mind he was counting how much he would gain if he never saw Dr. Anderson again. Such is the avarice of the human heart.

Fifteen minutes later, a carriage, drawn by two horses with flanks flecked with foam, dashed up to the door; and an old man with flushed cheeks, leaned far out of it, calling loudly, "Landlord! Landlord!"

"Who calls?" asked the innkeeper, appearing at his door.

The old man did not answer the question, but asked, "Are you the landlord?"

"I am," was the reply.

The stranger alighted from the carriage, and came near the proprietor, eying him narrowly as though he would read his every thought. Then he asked, "Have you an American, named William Anderson, staying at your hotel?"

"William Anderson," repeated the landlord, while a smile curled his lip. "Let me see—er—Why do you want to know?"

Again the old man disregarded the query, for he comprehended at once that the doctor was there, or had been lately. "Tell him that a friend wishes to see him," he said.

"I cannot," replied the landlord, the smile on his face broadening.

"And why not, pray?"

"He is not here."

"Then, where is he?"

"I do not know."

"When did you see him last?" demanded the old man, beginning to get angry.

"Twenty minutes ago," was the cool reply.

"Then, where is he?"

"I have said, 'I do not know.'"

The old man controlled his rising temper with an effort, "Look here, my good man, it is very important that I should see Dr. Anderson as soon as possible. If you can tell me anything of him, you will do him, as well as me, a great favor."

"Why didn't you say so before?" asked the innkeeper, who was making himself appear ridiculous by his efforts to be funny. He suddenly sobered up then, and said, "Well I'll tell you all I know. Yesterday a man, giving the name of Dr. William Anderson, came here without any baggage, paid me in advance, acted strangely all the time, walked the floor of his room last night instead of retiring, refused to eat any breakfast this morning and left about twenty minutes ago for a walk in the mountains. That is all I know of him."

The stranger thanked the landlord for his information, and asked, "Did he go in the direction of the Devil's Pit?"

The innkeeper was surprised, he had supposed the man to be a stranger in that section; but he spoke of the Devil's Pit, as though he was familiar with the surrounding country.

"Not exactly," the landlord replied. "But he could easily find his way there from the direction he has taken."

The old man waited for no more, but hastily said a few words to his driver, and springing into the carriage with the agility of a man of thirty, he was driven rapidly away toward the hills.

But as they neared the mountains the speed of the horses decreased—the road was more rough every succeeding rod. The old man leaned from the carriage window and scanned the landmarks as he passed. Finally he called to the driver to stop; then he alighted and left the road by a narrow mountain path, and climbed and climbed. The path was steep and dangerous, but the old man seemed to know his way, and ere long emerged upon a small plateau. Turning to his left he hastened across it, and soon was on the verge of the Devil's Pit. He gazed into the depths, expecting to see the body of the doctor lying at the bottom; but great was his joy to perceive only the white bones of a skeleton. "All that is left of the body of Merideth Kline," he murmured as he turned away. Raising his head he started, for coming toward him was a man with eyes set and walking in a mechanical way. The old man's hand twitched nervously as he placed it in his pocket. The

man he saw advancing was Dr. William Anderson who was following the eyes of Zeldee, the Devil's Daughter.

He had not seen the old man, for he could not see anything except those terrible eyes, they were luring him on, as once they had lured Merideth Kline. For weeks he had been following them—from his home in Baltimore to New York, then across the Atlantic to Liverpool, then to London, from there to Havre and then to Paris, where he remained a week or two, following the eyes day after day through the streets of the gay capital; several times while there he came near to losing his life under the wheels of passing carriages, being rescued at the last moment by the *gens d' arms*; and every time the eyes of Zeldee would flash with jealous disappointment. From Paris he traveled across the continent to Viena and from there to the village, of which we have spoken, near the eastern border of the empire.

Not a moment's rest had Zeldee given him, day and night she had tormented him, by her form when he slept and by her eyes when he awoke. He had suffered much, and now she was leading him to the end of it, on earth at least. If her plan succeeded the Devil's Pit would claim another victim.

But there was a sentinel by the pit, an old man with a keen eye, a clear mind and a strong arm, standing, waiting with a hand in his pocket, grasping a talisman. Nearer and nearer came the condemned man, for Zeldee had condemned him, nearer and nearer he advanced as the eyes retreated, nearer and still nearer, until one step more would have made him totter on the edge of the

pit. But that step was never taken, some one seized him by the arm and forced something into his hand. Immediately the eyes vanished and he staggered back from the yawning abyss; he felt faint and weary and would probably have fallen had not a strong arm supported him.

After a few moments rest he looked at the something in his hand, it was hard and smooth, about the size of a filbert. While he was wondering what it was, a voice said in his ear, "It is the philosopher's stone." The voice sounded familiar, and looking up, he found himself face to face with Marcus Anthoin, who had saved him from the pit, and robbed Zeldee of her revenge.

Our tale is nearly told. We might go on and on, recording the events in the lives of Anderson or Anthoin, either would be interesting, but we are telling a tale of a soul, and that soul, "The Devil's Daughter." And now that she has lost her power over the other characters of our narrative we can no more determine her movements and hence must end the story. But before we do so, for the benefit of the reader, we will tell in a brief way, what we would tell in detail, if it was prolonged.

We would tell that Anthoin and Anderson left Austria together and were travelling companions until they reached Paris; here they separated, Anthoin remaining in the City of Fashion and Anderson crossing to the British Isles and thence to the United States of America.

We would tell that Mrs. Edna Flemming, the gay and dashing young widow, had married a rising young lawyer of Baltimore, who was noted

for his fastness and love of spending money, three months after her futile attempt to facinate Dr. Anderson. And that they separated in a year, she taking to the stage and he—well—he doing about the same as ever.

We would tell that Aunt Dinah, the old negress, had returned to the elder Flemmings, saying in her quaint way, "Bless my soul, if I's gwyng to lib wid a woman dat forgits Marse Hugo in nine months.

We would tell, how Dr. Anderson arrived at Baltimore in due time, to the great delight of his many friends, who informed him of the report that he had over drawn his account at the bank and then skipped; and how he immediately repaired to the bank and adjusted matters with the bank officials; and then how he searched for the little lady, who had captivated his heart, and who the fiery eyes of Zeldee had driven from his mind, when he went on his mad trip to Europe, but who he now remembered again and loved more than ever.

And then we would tell, how sweet Gertrude . regained her health and strength breathing the northern Virginia country air; and how one morning in the latter part of June, when the sun shone bright and hotly, scorching the verdure and choking the music of the little songsters in the trees back into their throats, she and her young cousin Annie, from the farm house, wandered down a shady lane and then by a path, they had made themselves through the woods, to a quiet nook on the banks of a small riverlet. It was their favorite retreat on those hot sultry mornings. They could use the greatest freedom there, for no one knew of the place

except themselves or if they did, they did not care to visit it. So the two girls enjoyed the beauty of the shady, green spot all alone. It was bordered on three sides by thick foliage, and in front by a deep glassy bit of water that afforded an excellent bathing pool. A short way out the water tumbled, and broke itself into foam upon the rocks, but in the pool it was still, and often would the girls, feeling secure in their quiet retreat, lay aside their clothing and enjoy a dip in the cool stream.

But on the day of which we would tell, there was an intruder upon their privacy, though they knew it not, and he did not intend to intrude. It was Dr. William Anderson, who was roaming in that section in hopes of stumbling on a clue to the whereabouts of the woman he loved, for he had heard she was somewhere in the neighborhood. He was not exactly in this shady dell, but was where he could command a full view of it. When he saw them appear his heart leaped with joy.

"Found at last," he said to himself, and would have gone forward and have spoken to Gertrude, but, like all unavowed lovers he was timid.

"Several months ago," he thought, "She may have had a passing fancy for me, but it may be different now, and I may be unwelcome; but I shall feast my eyes upon her for awhile, she surely can't object to that."

But he saw more than he bargained for.

The girls were warm with their walk and knew the quickest way to cool themselves. So Anderson watched them disrobe, they being unconscious of the eyes peering at them, and plunge into the stream. He felt guilty of treason to the fair Ger-

trude, the other he had scarcely seen, but he was fascinated and could not tear himself from the spot. Who would not have done was he did, with Youth and Beauty gamboling before him like two nymphs of the wood? Finally with a mighty effort, he tore away and crept cautiously through the undergrowth.

When, a year later, he married Gertrude, for we would tell of his marrying her, he told her of his adventures with Zeldee, and after giving a description of her he added:

"She was indeed beautiful, but her brazen looks and immodesty outweighed the beauty."

"I imagine it did," she said.

He smiled at her words, and asked, "Did you ever bathe in a rivelet near where you stayed in Virginia, a year ago?"

A blush was her answer and she asked, "Why?"

"Because, I saw you once," he said. And then he told her all about it.

Her blush deepened while he talked and when he finished, she shook her dainty fist at him and said. "You naughty, naughty man. How dared you do it?"

"How dared I?" he asked, speaking her words. "It was enough to make me dare anything; for—" and his voice became low and tender. "You were much fairer than Zeldee."

PART FOUR.

TWO YEARS AFTER.

CHAPTER I.

THE DEATH OF MARCUS ANTHOIN.

DEAR GEORGE:—

One year ago I seated myself, with pen in hand, to put on paper the events in my life that pertain to the Devil's daughter; but instead, I wrote a letter to Marcus Anthoin. Had I not done so, my story would have gone forth to the public, and when too late, I perhaps, would have regretted it. Now the story will never be written, at least not by me.

I told you in a former letter, of Zeldee's attempted revenge, and how the old man, whose acquaintance we formed on that night of wind and snow in your Southern city, had saved my life. Well, I corresponded with him at intervals after his return to America and found him an interesting correspondent, though given a little to melancholy, sometimes writing an entire letter in a wierd, pathetic strain.

I do not know why I wrote to him instead of writing my tale, unless, in thinking of him I could not resist the temptation of dropping him a few lines.

Letter writing, as you know, is my principal occupation now; for with that marvelous stone in my possession it is not necessary for me to do anything to earn my daily bread. So I do not follow my profession any longer, but live in blissful idleness, enjoying the companionship of my wife. In reply to my letter Anthoin wrote me the following:

“MY DEAR WILLIAM:—

It was an agreeable surprise to receive a letter from you after three months of silence. Believe me when I say I have thought of you night and day during that time. So you are going to write a tale of your adventures with Zeldee? I know it will be interesting, but I have one favor to ask of you if you still intend to do so, that is, that you will wait just one year before you begin it. I know when you have written it you will have it published, and for reasons, which you already know, I would not like everything you would have to tell, to be known to the public while I am living—one year from now all will be over; one year from now the grim reaper, Death, will cut me down, gather me in his bundle of sheaves and carry me away; then you can tell your story without causing me any inconvenience, and if men praise me I will know it, and if they condemn me I will know it not.

My health has been failing rapidly since last I wrote to you, and I am now a physical as well as a mental wreck. But nevertheless, I am doing what I have asked you not to do, writing a tale of some of our adventures. I do not intend that it shall get in print, however, but will address it to you so that you will get it when I am dead. That will be one

year from now. With the last strength of my tired soul I will visit you in your room, when the end comes, you may surely expect me. So from now till then good-bye. I shall not write to you again until I write my last letter.

Yours truly,

MARCUS ANTHOIN."

It has been a year since that letter was written, and it makes me sad as I copy it here. I have written to him since then, but have received no reply. How he'll visit me when the end comes I know no more than what he said in his letter.

* * *

The hour has passed, Marcus Anthoin is no more. As I penned the words, "Than what he said in his letter," a strange sensation came over me. To shake the feeling off I raised my head, and there, standing in the center of the room, was the one of whom I had been writing. He was greatly changed, but yet I knew him, his face was pale and wan, his hair was more white, if that could be, than when last I saw him, and his eyes were sunken and had a set glassy stare in them. He opened his thin, bloodless lips and spoke:

"Dr. Anderson," he said, "I am going on that long, long journey and may never return, good bye."

I tried to speak, but could not utter a word. I arose from my chair and extended my hand, then my light which had been burning low, suddenly went out, and my power of speech returned. "Marcus Anthoin," I cried, but there was no reply. "Marcus Anthoin," again I called, but still no reply. I struck a match, relighted the

lamp and looked about the room, there was no one in it except my wife and myself. She was sweetly sleeping, with her fair face resting on her pillow, as she had been before my light went out; I examined the doors and windows, but they were all securely fastened as I had barred them; then I looked at the floor, in the centre of the room, where I had seen him stand, and on the carpet I saw a small drop of blood. I gazed at it for a moment and then I knew how Marcus Anthoin had visited me when he was dead.

DEAR GEORGE:—

I begin again after three days. This morning's mail brought me two letters and a paper in a package, together with a batch of manuscript. I glanced at the paper first and my eyes fell upon a marked paragraph headed—"Found Dead in His Room"—it read as follows:

"Laurence Mayo, an eccentric old man was found dead in his room at No. ———— St. early this morning. When found his head was resting on a table where he had been writing. By his head was a bundle of papers and a letter, both addressed to Dr. William Anderson, of Baltimore, Md. The coroner was called, but deemed an inquest unnecessary, as it was evident, the man died of old age."

The letters were, one from the man in whose house Marcus Anthoin, or Laurence Mayo, as he called himself, roomed, describing the position in which the dead man was found, and stating that he forwarded therewith the bundle of papers and the letter addressed to me, and also sent me a daily

paper giving an account of Mayo's death. The other was the one from poor Anthoin. It was written just before his death. I will copy it for your benefit. It ran:—

“DEAR DR. ANDERSON:

The time has come. When you receive this I will be no longer on earth. Even now the icy hand of death is resting on my brow; so what I have to write I must write briefly. I have sealed the manuscript of the autobiography I have been writing, and addressed it to you; in writing your story, if you still intend to write it, use what part of it you think best and destroy the remainder. I wish you much success; and if your story is ever published I hope the readers will condemn me no more than I deserve. As I promised in my letter of a year ago, I will visit you, in your room, ere my weary soul is caught by that irresistible power and carried to the Valley of the Shadow of Death. This may be my last journey through the darkness. My name may have been called while I was truant from my post, if so, it will never be called again, and I will be no more on earth. Then a long, long farewell. Eternity is a long time Doctor. Eternity is a long time. —Yours in Death, Marcus Anthoin.”

I could not help but shed a tear as I finished reading. He, who I had once called a murderer, had proved a true friend, and now he was dead. I read his autobiography, and through it all ran a strain of melancholy so natural with the man; but as I have determined not to write my story, I will preserve it as a keepsake from him.

My Dear George, I have written quite enough,

and will be glad to receive a letter from you at an early date. You must forgive me for letting poor Anthoin's sadness touch my letter, but I am sure what I have written will interest you. With best wishes. I remain,

Sincerely yours,

WILLIAM ANDERSON.

CHAPTER II.

ZELDEE, THE DEVIL'S DAUGHTER.

BEING AN EXTRACT FROM THE DIARY OF THE REV.

GEO. HOLLAND.

June 6th, 18—. Today I received a letter from my esteemed friend Dr. William Anderson; and ever since reading it, I have been thinking of the queer old man who was his subject. I had the pleasure, I suppose I may call it a pleasure, of seeing and talking to this old man on one occasion; that was between two and three years ago, but I remember the event as distinctly as though it was yesterday. Anderson was with me at the time, and through a long, stormy night in midwinter we listened to one of the most marvelous tales of which I have ever heard. It made a deep impression on me at the time, but the feeling soon wore off, and I looked upon the narrator as a mad-man, and his tale but the raving of one.

A few weeks later the news reached me, that the old man had been arrested, tried and convicted


of the murder of his wife; and then a short while later, I heard of his mysterious escape from prison on the eve of the execution day. But still I believed him mad, until my friend, the doctor, a few months after his return home, wrote of his experience with the wonderful Zeldee. Then I began to realize that there was some truth in what Marcus Anthoin had told; for William Anderson is too brilliant a man to be deluded by a phantom. Another thing that influenced me in this direction was that it had influenced Anderson to accept the Christian belief, whereas, before he had denied it.

After perusing the letter, I received today, I fell to thinking of what might or might not be, and almost wished I had the knowledge of the other world that Anthoin claimed to have. With these thoughts in my mind, I left home late this afternoon and wandered down town. In my abstraction I boarded the first electric car that I saw, it chanced to be a red one, and ere my fit of musing ended, I found myself at the Avondale Park.

That is a lovely place, with its large cool springs, lovely flowers and shady mountain side. I have often been there and always enjoyed its grandeur. Today it seemed more beautiful than ever. As I sat on a bench musing, my attention was attracted to a fat, chubby woman with a pleasant face, who was playing with a pretty little child, who she called "Ernardine." By the side of the lady, and playing with the child also, stood a poetic looking man. He had light, sandy hair and mustache; and his face was one of those good, honest ones that I always love to look at. It was easy too see, by their happiness, that it was a well mated man and

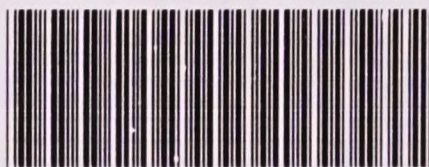
wife, with their only child. As I watched them, a couple also man and wife, I presume, sauntered up to them. I did not particularly notice but one of the new arrivals. She was a tall, dark woman with black, searching eyes, that made me feel, when I looked at them, like I was looking into the eyes of a serpent. The fat, chubby woman instinctively drew her child closer to her side; and when she spoke, there was a sound of loathing in her voice. The dark woman made some light remark and laughed, and to me it seemed I had heard that laugh before. I wondered then, and I wonder now, if the soul that tormented Anthoin and Anderson had broken away from hell again, to inhabit a body from which a soul had fled, and if this dark, dangerous looking woman, was "Zeldee, the Devil's Daughter."

THE END.



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